Edited by Herbert Kaufman

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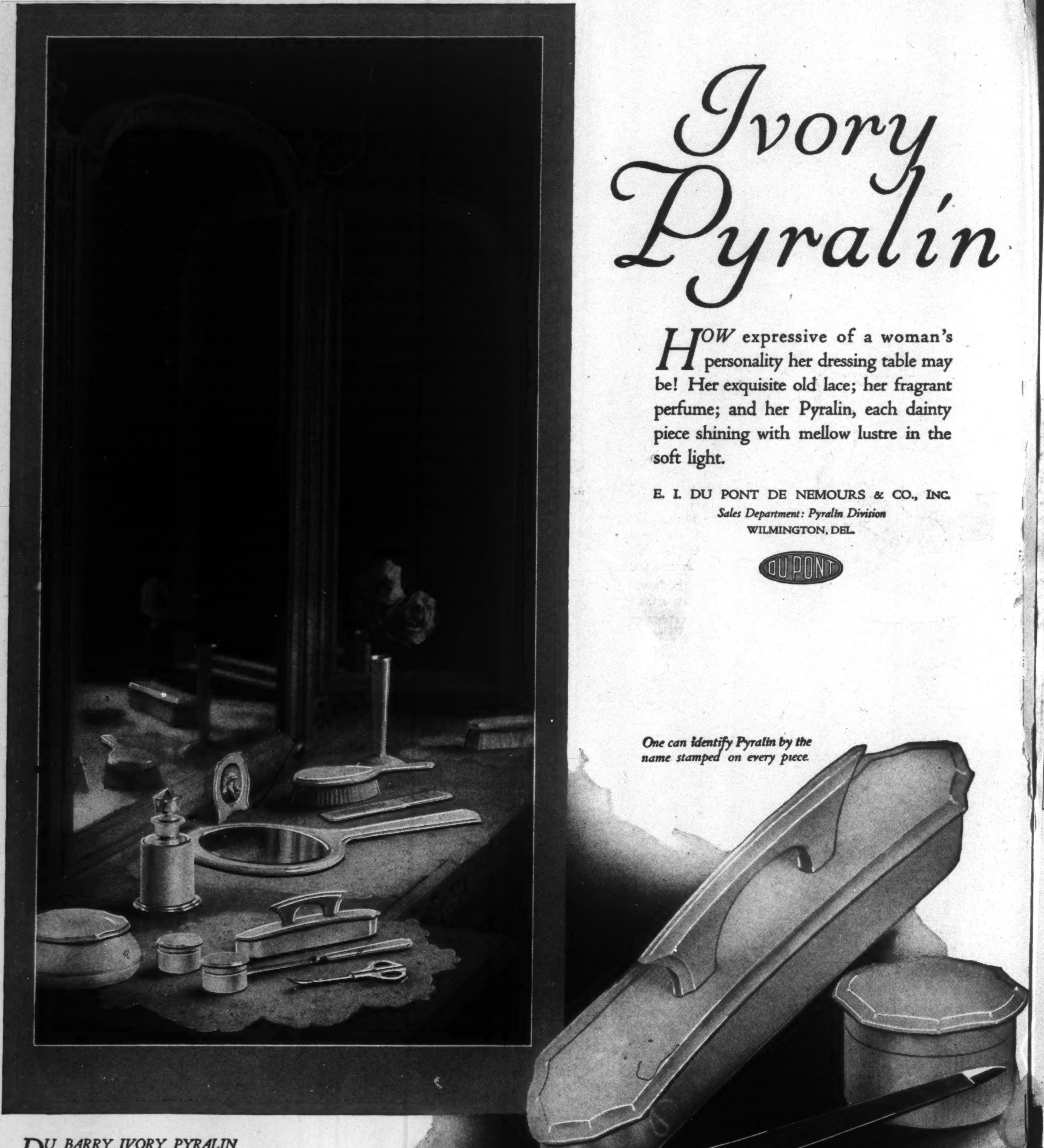

Ivory Pyralin

HOW expressive of a woman's personality her dressing table may be! Her exquisite old lace; her fragrant perfume; and her Pyralin, each dainty piece shining with mellow lustre in the soft light.

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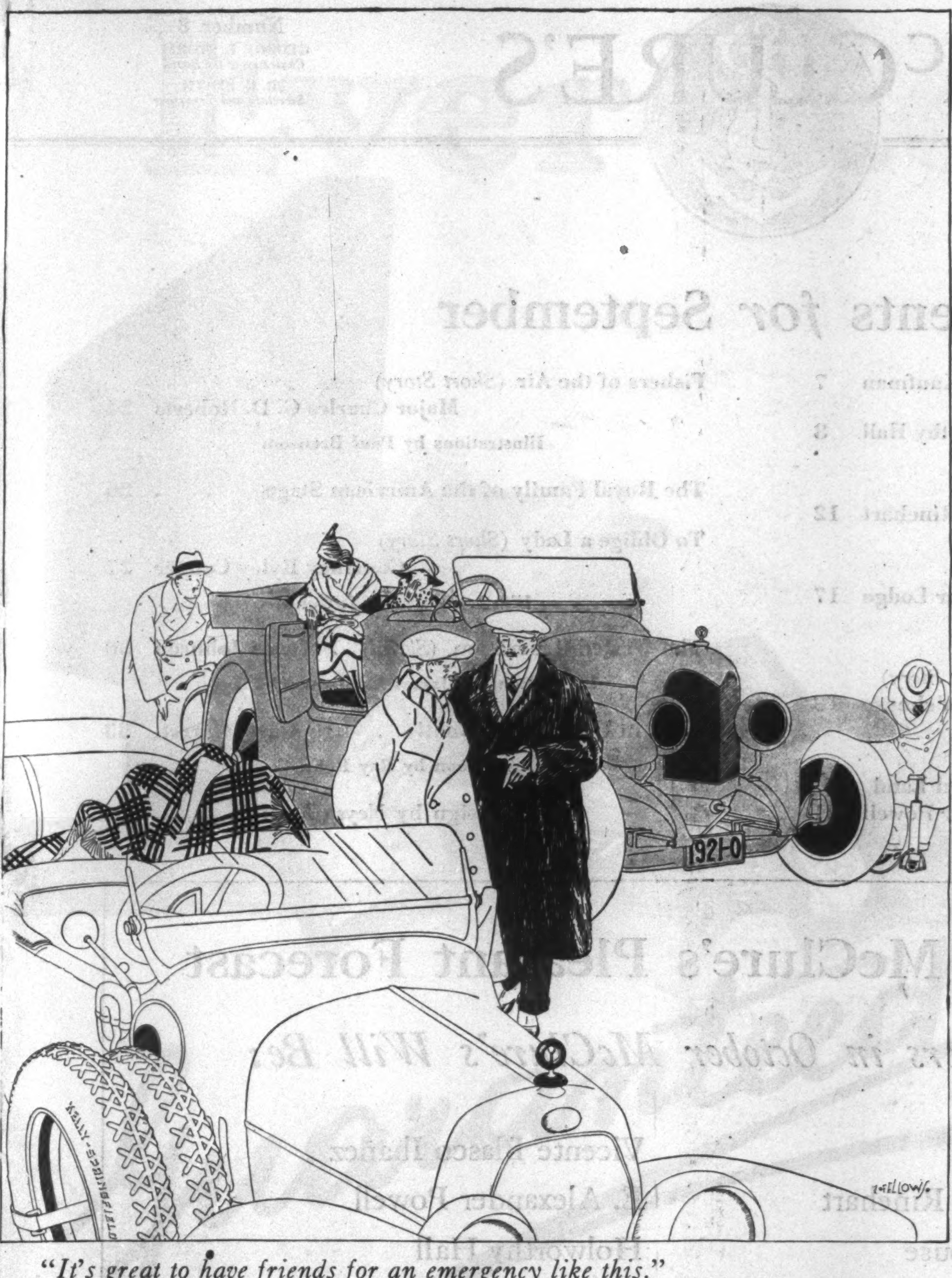
One can identify Pyralin by the name stamped on every piece.

DU BARRY IVORY PYRALIN is illustrated. There are many other beautiful patterns. Made also in Shell Pyralin and Amber Pyralin—decorated in colors or plain. Sold at the leading stores in complete sets or single pieces, all of standard design easily matched anywhere.



"It's great to have friends for an emergency like this."
"It's better to have Kelly-Springfields—then you never have the emergency."
—Submitted by Miss Claire Newman

KELLY
Springfield
TIRE

Prize Contest Announcement

AFTER weeks of consideration of the conversations submitted by the 120,000 or more persons who sent in entries to the Kelly-Springfield Prize Contest advertised in the March issue of this magazine, the judges rendered a decision in favor of the dialogue sent in by Miss Claire Newman of 703 Mt. Prospect Ave., Newark, New Jersey.

The judges had a difficult task. There were a large number of exceedingly clever entries, but many of them had to be discarded either because they did not quite fit the picture or because they were so similar to captions suggested by two or three hundred other contestants that it was impossible to decide which had phrased the idea best.

Every letter submitted was read as it came in and was immediately either laid aside for further consideration or eliminated for one reason or another. When the closing date came the judges had over a thousand entries for final consideration. This number was gradually sifted down to fifteen. Each of the three judges then wrote down his first, second and third choice of the fifteen. When the lists were compared, it was found that Miss Newman's contribution was the only one which had been chosen by all three judges, and a check for $250.00 was therefore mailed to her.

A contribution from far-off Peru got two votes and so did one from a Pennsylvania farm, but the winning caption was the only one that got all three votes.

The entries came in from all over the world—from Canada, Mexico, Cuba, South America, Hawaii, the Philippines, Japan, China, France, England, Alaska and every state in the Union.

Only four contestants failed to recognize the picture as a Kelly-Springfield advertisement.

Volume 53
HERBERT KAUFMAN
President
EDGAR G. SISSON
Vice-President

McCLURE'S

Number 8
GEORGE L. STORM
Chairman of the Board
B. G. SMITH
Secretary and Treasurer

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Also October McClure's Pleasant Forecast

Your Entertainers in October McClure's Will Be:

Irvin S. Cobb
Mary Roberts Rinehart
P. G. Wodehouse
E. Phillips Oppenheim
Vicente Blasco Ibañez
E. Alexander Powell
Holworthy Hall
Owen Johnson

We venture to state modestly on the evidence above that we could call this an All Star Number. But we do not, for the conclusive reason that we could say the same thing about every number of McClure's. We *do* say, however, that these tellers of agreeable tales have given of the best of their versatile talents in this particular month to grasp and hold your imagination. You will find, too, distributed among the pages of the present issue announcement of each writer's portion of the October program.

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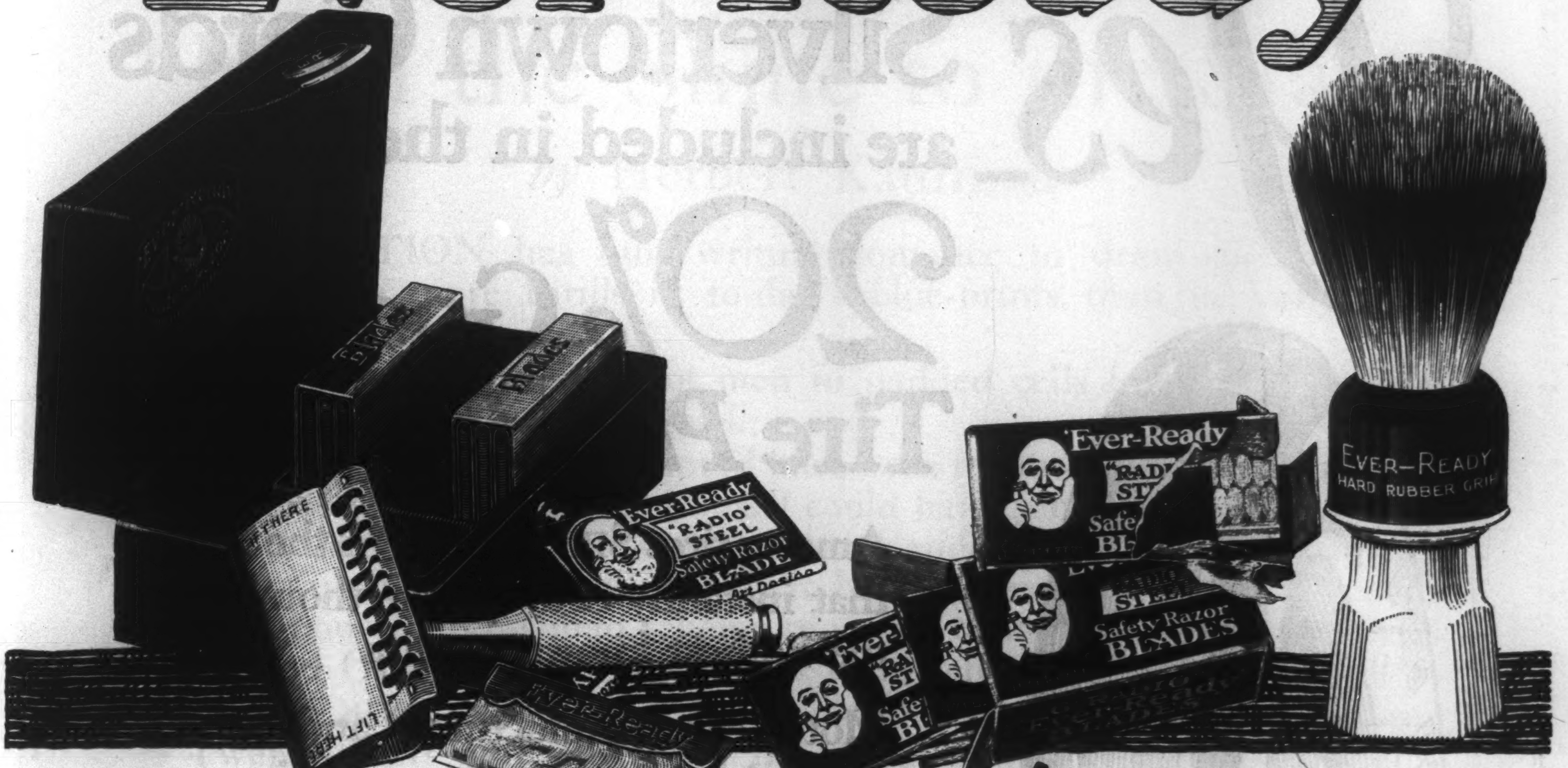
McClure's Magazine, Inc., 25 West 44th St., New York

Ever-Ready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The foe of tough beards and friend of tender faces. The great big dollar's worth that gives millions of men the quickest, cleanest, coolest shaves of their lives.

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Its bristles are locked permanently in a vise-like grip of stone hard, vulcanized rubber. Bristles can't come out. Get an Ever-Ready and know brush satisfaction.

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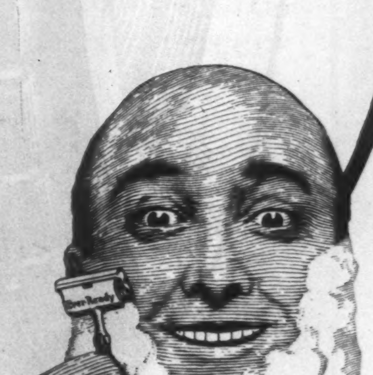

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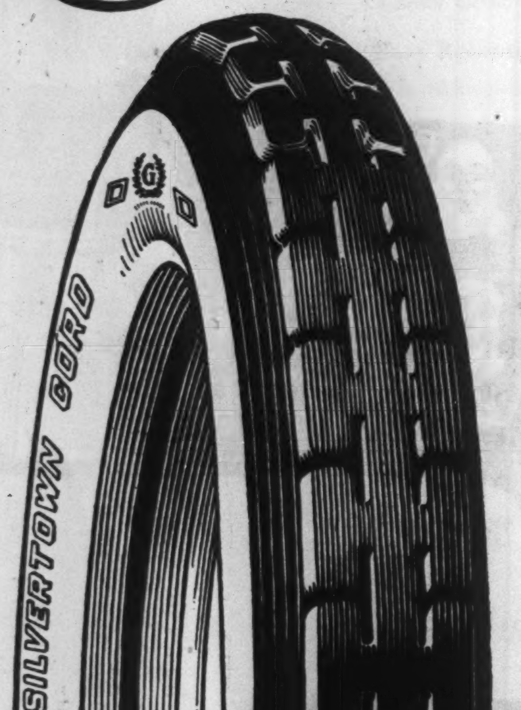


The anti-skid safety tread Silvertown Cord

Among tires SILVERTOWN is the name that instantly conveys the thought of the highest known quality.

Motor car manufacturers and dealers are quick to emphasize to their prospects that their cars are equipped with Silvertowns—knowing that neither explanation nor argument is necessary.

The genuine value of Silvertowns has given them first place in the esteem of motorists. Their jet black anti-skid safety treads and creamy white sides give them the air of distinction that is expected in a product which is the highest art of tire craftsmanship.

The full name—"Goodrich Silvertown Cord"—appears on each tire. Look for it, and get the genuine.

THE B. F. GOODRICH RUBBER COMPANY
Akron, Ohio

Your dealer will supply you with Goodrich Silvertown Cords, Goodrich Fabrics and Goodrich Red and Gray Tubes at the 20% price reduction.

Volume 53
Number 8

McCLURE'S

SEPTEMBER 1921

"From the Slime to the Stars"

by Herbert Kaufman

IMAGINATION has quit writing romance to draw specifications. There are more thrills in to-day's blue-prints than in yesterday's yellow-backs.

The nineteenth century put men in padded cells for ideas that now place them at the head of nations.

The Woolworth building would have been too much even for Benjamin Franklin to swallow. Morse himself could hardly have been expected to accept Marconi seriously. Commodore Vanderbilt (with the ridicule of his own railroad project still ringing in his ears) jeered away from his door Westinghouse and his mad scheme to stop a train of cars with a pipeful of air, and George Westinghouse, in turn, refused to subject himself to derision by attending a dinner to Orville Wright.

Twenty years ago you might have bought a half interest in Henry Ford's business for $50,000, just as your father could have gone whacks with Bell for a less amount.

The record of progress is a continuous battle between confidence and incredulity.

Achievement has never yet failed prediction.

There are no lasting problems. Anything sufficiently important to occupy world attention soon challenges world invention.

Civilization has yet to face a brink without finally throwing a bridge across the chasm.

The worst that ever happens to civilization is a little loss of time.

Father Adam's estate is always intact—the family furniture must be repaired from time to time, but humanity's one important asset, the knowledge that man has gathered in his struggle up from the slime to the stars, passes on from generation to generation, and continually places one century's knowledge at the disposal of the next.

The birthright of every man is the combined intelligence of his predecessors.

We begin our era with transportation established in three dimensions, with wireless communication a commercial fact, with hydraulic electric pneumatic engineering in universal practise. Our scratch is far beyond the goal of pre-rebellion's farthest flung dreams.

If we do not achieve more in our span than was accomplished by our parents in their areas of operation, we are failures. No comparable equipment was ever at the service of any people.

Copyright by Herbert Kaufman, September, 1921

A Modern Girl, Her Pursuit of Power and Her Choice of Success.

Miss Nemesis

by Holworthy Hall

Illustrations by Gerald Leake

IN the spring, the senior class at Waban College appoints a day of reckoning on which the girls put aside all trace of whatever diplomacy was born in them, and tell themselves by secret ballot exactly what they think of one another. This referendum coming, as it does, at the end of four years of intimacy, brings out the truth in a very naked state; so that when the figures are tabulated and printed in the class annual, and when the book is finally distributed, it takes unusual bravery — or superb indifference — for any girl to peep within the covers until she is alone and unobserved.

There was once a girl who opened her book in public; not because she was too confident, or too callous, but because she honestly didn't suppose that she was listed among the champions. She didn't believe that she had ever made herself conspicuous, either for better or for worse. She was a dark and boyish little girl, with serious principles and a rather blunt manner; you would have taken one look at her, and decided that she was honesty and loyalty and sympathy personified; and after a second look, you would have said that she might have been adorable, if she had only done her hair up differently. At any rate, she was the type of girl who ought naturally to have made a regiment of friends; but, as a matter of fact, she was merely one of the vivid colors in the background. The friendship of girls, at twenty, is based on a sort of soviet of the emotions; and this girl, who at heart was one of the most emotional of them all, was far too shy to contribute very many of her sentiments to the common pool. There were those who liked her, and respected her, but there were none who had ever traded soul-experiences with her, and for this reason, they had put her down as unapproachable. Unapproachableness, however, wasn't on the ballot; and she didn't imagine that she had won votes for any other quality.

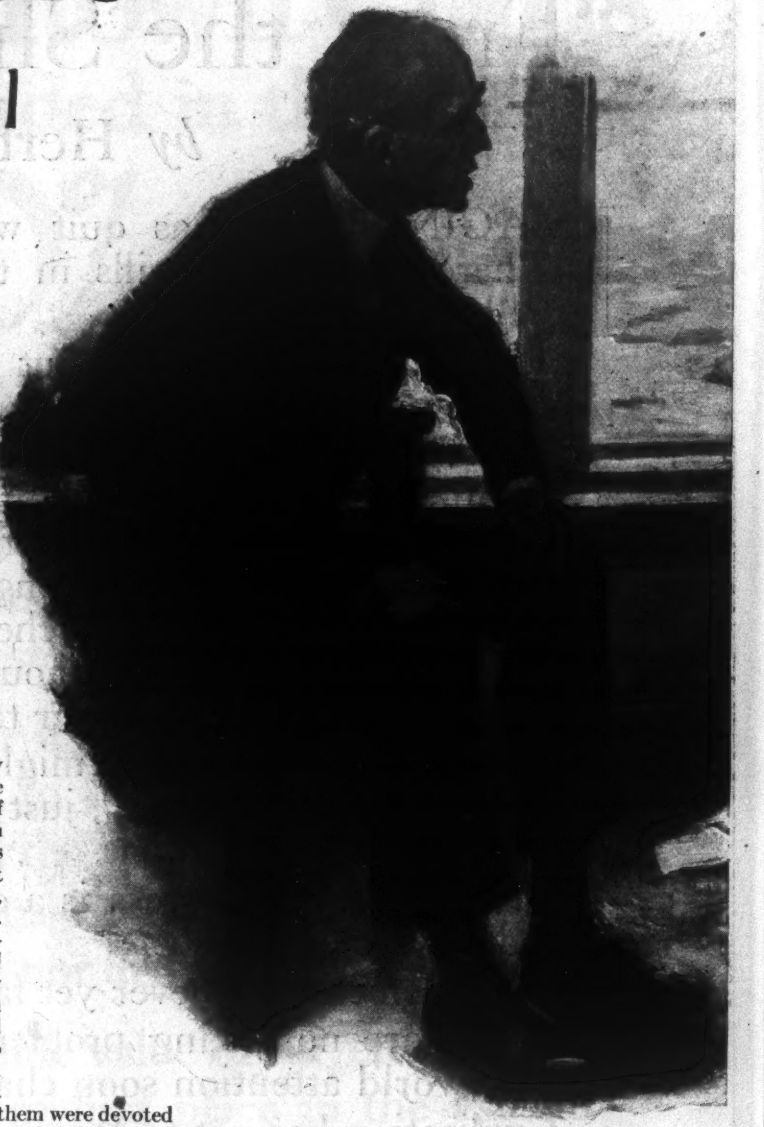
She opened her book, and turned idly to the tables of statistics; and a few minutes later, when the volume tumbled from her lap, her eyes had depths in them, and she was trying to fathom her classmates, and incidentally herself. Out of a hundred and sixty votes, she had polled 5 as the most charming senior, 42 as the most modest, 51 as the most self-centered, 77 as the greatest bluffer, 84 as the most genuine, 139 as the hardest to understand, and 140 as the girl who, if she adopted a career, would be the most likely to succeed.

Her first reaction was an acute bewilderment, diluted with equal parts of pride and chagrin. After that she began to analyze the curious contradictions in the record, and the more she analyzed the more sensitive she became. Evidently she had proved to be as great a puzzle to the class as she sometimes was to herself. But it was that final item which frightened her, at the same time that it gave her a thrill of exaltation. Was she to take it as a profound compliment, complete in itself, or was it merely in the nature of a challenge?

Eventually she took it as a challenge. She had often petted a vague idea of going out into the world and helping to uplift it by getting underneath and pushing, instead of following the old-fashioned practise of standing on a pinnacle and lecturing. Now she was the sudden possessor of a hundred and forty separate recommendations. Plainly she was charged with the responsibility of capitalizing her education and her womanhood and of upholding the judgment of her class. With all those statistics back of her, how could she do otherwise? Go home to live with her aunt, dance through a season or two, marry a nice young man, and settle down to apply her knowledge of philosophy to her husband, government to her children, sociology to the cook, and economics to the butcher? It was unthinkable.

She was casting about for inspiration when a young professor happened to remark, in her hearing, that women would never be a world power, except as barnacles, until they became a money power. They could never be a money power, he said, until they learned how to be business women; and they could never learn to be business women until they stopped thinking in terms of clerical work and began thinking in terms of administration. Furthermore, if they were serious in their hope of revolutionizing the world, they mustn't let matrimony stand in their way. Not that he condemned marriage, by any means; but that so often a woman allowed it to spoil her chances of personal glory. A husband didn't sacrifice his personal ambitions; why should a wife? If a man asked a girl to marry him, and she said yes, provided he gave up his business and took care of the garden and furnace, why, the man would be a fool to marry her. Was it less ridiculous for the man to expect the woman to give up her own career, and act as housekeeper? Answer—No.

Now the professor was very handsome and magnetic; he was a Harvard graduate, and a Doctor of Philosophy (Oxon.); he came from a family which had social prominence; and he could afford to dress the part — and also to have modern ideas about women. The seniors had voted him the most popular member of the faculty; all of them were devoted to him, a dozen or two were always fancying themselves in love with him; and to Miss Cloud herself his theories were approximately sacred.



"That's our platform; all we want's just to play fair, Arnold, or by

SHE went to him and asked several sweeping questions; and when she returned to her room she had made up her mind to be a Power.

Her uncle had left her last year several thousand dollars and a block of stock in a small shipping company. The executor had been doing his best to find a purchaser for this stock, but a satisfactory offer was still wanting. It occurred to Miss Cloud, now, that if she entered a business in which she already owned an interest, her opportunities of becoming a Power would, of course, be multiplied. Then, too, in the shipping business she would be a pioneer. What other woman, if you please, dealt indiscriminately with Para and Pernambuco, Kobe and Yokohama? The very names themselves were fragrant with mystery and tremulous with adventure. . . .

She wrote a long letter to the executor, who replied in five solid pages of platitude and protest. She sent him, then, an imperious telegram to which he answered meekly: "Have your own way."

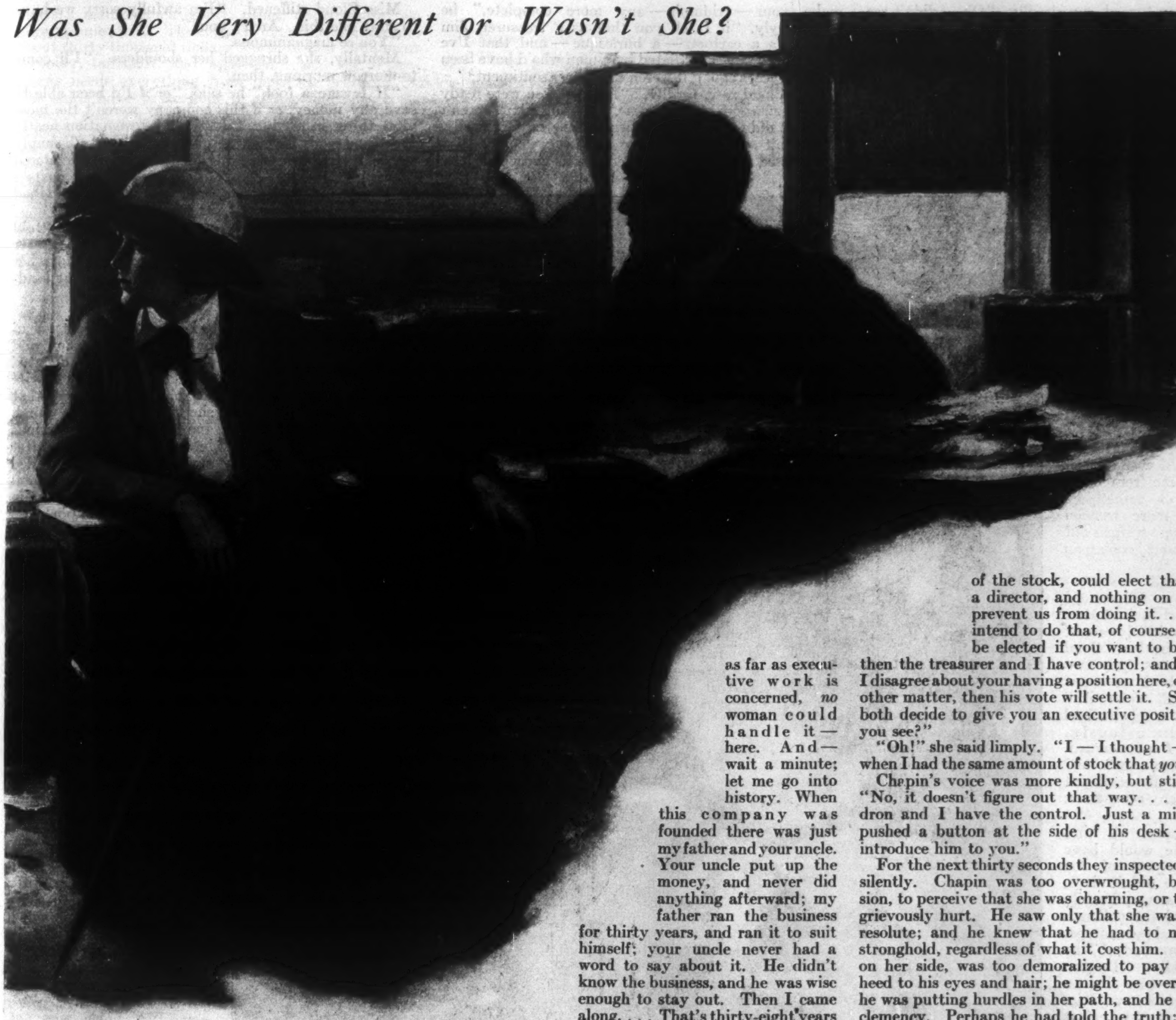
As if she didn't, habitually!

Mr. Arnold Chapin, of Chapin and Company, (Members of the Associated Freight Brokers and Forwarders of the Port of New York), sat back in his swivel-chair and gazed out over the oily water of the harbor without seeing it. For eight lean years, Mr. Chapin had been telling himself, half in humor and half in desperation, that he might as well cheer up, for the worst was yet to come; but a week ago he had received definite word that it was coming. The stock certificate issued in the name of the late Mr. Cloud had been sent in for transfer to a woman, and at the same time, Mr. Chapin had been informed that this woman was deeply interested in the affairs of the company, and was planning to take part in the active management of it. Chapin had tried to be optimistic, and he had even said, jokingly, to the treasurer, that he hoped this new Cloud on the horizon wasn't a storm-cloud; but as he gazed out over the harbor his mood was one of intense depression. To be sure, he knew that he controlled the company, and that he could always barricade it against invasion, but even so, he felt intuitively that he was booked for trouble. He was afraid of women, anyway, and Miss Margaret Cloud held far too many shares of stock to be ignored. Granted that he could keep her hands away from the machinery; but how was he going to keep her away from the office? How was he going to insure himself against the blether and the interference of a person to whom he could never talk turkey?

A ship's clock on the wall struck blithely, and almost at the same moment Chapin's telephone rang. Miss Cloud to see him, by appointment. "Send her in," said Chapin, and as he waited, unsmiling, he thought up an epigram — Nemesis is the only woman who ever keeps her appointments, punctually. He rather liked that epigram, but it was too true to be consoling.

The door opened to a brisk little girl in a blue serge tailored suit. During the week Chapin had often visualized the sort of woman who would yearn for the shipping business, and none of the pictures had been at all romantic; so that he was startled, and then amazed, by his first sight of the new stockholder. Age and appearance, however, had no leverage on his convictions, and as he shook hands, with dignity, he wondered if a

Was She Very Different or Wasn't She?



what's fair and right. Ain't that so, Miss? So it's up to you George, the young lady an' I'll make a team!"

young woman wouldn't actually be more difficult to deal with than an older one.

He shook hands, and invited her to sit down, and then while he made inconsequential remarks about the weather — so warm for June — he watched her until the color crept up into her cheeks and stayed there. She noted that his hair was prematurely gray and his eyes prematurely tired; she noted the sensitive, humorous twist of his mouth, and the deadly seriousness of his chin, and she approved of him, and liked him at once — but where were his hospitality and his graciousness?

"I suppose you know what I came in for, Mr. Chapin?"

He nodded soberly. "Yes. Your letter only hinted at it, but your lawyer was — more explicit."

"And what do you think about it?" She was so buoyant and unsuspecting that he hated to step on her, but for the good of the company it had to be done.

"What do I think of it?" He hesitated. "I hardly know how to tell you."

Her voice was more than a trifle frosted. "Why — you don't mean to say you're *opposed* to it, do you?" She took his silence — correctly — as a confirmation; and she sat forward in her chair. "Why, I — I never supposed for an *instant* . . . I thought you'd be . . . And you *object* to it? *Do* you? *Why* do you? . . . Simply because I'm a woman?"

Chapin shook his head. "Miss Cloud, there's simply nothing here you could do. There's nothing *for* you to do. It's a small company; we've all the staff we need; you'd simply be treading on somebody's heels. And as far as executive work is concerned, *no* woman could handle it — here. And — wait a minute; let me go into history. When this company was founded there was just my father and your uncle. Your uncle put up the money, and never did anything afterward; my father ran the business for thirty years, and ran it to suit himself; your uncle never had a word to say about it. He didn't know the business, and he was wise enough to stay out. Then I came along. . . . That's thirty-eight years of Chapin control, Chapin methods, Chapin judgment; and if any one else should want to divide responsibility, make changes, try experiments — especially in times like these — and you couldn't help it, when you've such a large interest, and no experience — —"

Miss Cloud, who had been taken completely off her feet, recovered herself, and held up her hand. She had set out to be a Power, and she didn't intend to be balked so early. "But, Mr. Chapin, in all those years how many dividends have you paid?"

Chapin turned red. "None at all. My father killed himself, and I suppose I'm killing *myself* as fast as I conveniently can, to keep the concern going — to keep it solvent. We never had enough working capital. We're just beginning — —"

"AND that's exactly why I want to come. I want to help build it up — see it grow. You certainly won't be any worse off with me than you were without me — will you?" Her tone was proof that she was both baffled and indignant. "And when I own precisely as much stock as *you* do — can't I come in here and be one of the executives if I want to? I don't see why not. I'll be a director, anyway."

Chapin shook his head, slowly. "That doesn't necessarily follow. . . . You see, Miss Cloud, the company is controlled by three directors, and all three of them have to be stockholders. Just at present, there *are* only three stockholders; that's all there ever were. You and I together have four hundred and ninety-eight shares; and our treasurer has the other two shares; but his vote as a *director* carries the same weight as anybody else's. And if I assigned one share of stock to our attorney, say, to qualify *him* as a director, then the treasurer and the attorney and I, holding a majority of the stock, could elect that attorney a director, and nothing on earth could prevent us from doing it. . . . I don't intend to do that, of course. You can be elected if you want to be, but even then the treasurer and I have control; and if you and I disagree about your having a position here, or about any other matter, then his vote will settle it. So unless we both decide to give you an executive position — don't you see?"

"Oh!" she said limply. "I — I thought — I thought when I had the same amount of stock that *you* had — —"

Chapin's voice was more kindly, but still inflexible. "No, it doesn't figure out that way. . . . Mr. Waldron and I have the control. Just a minute" — he pushed a button at the side of his desk — "and I'll introduce him to you."

For the next thirty seconds they inspected each other silently. Chapin was too overwrought, by long tension, to perceive that she was charming, or that she was grievously hurt. He saw only that she was angry and resolute; and he knew that he had to maintain his stronghold, regardless of what it cost him. Miss Cloud, on her side, was too demoralized to pay any further heed to his eyes and hair; he might be overworked, but he was putting hurdles in her path, and he deserved no clemency. Perhaps he had told the truth; perhaps he could shut her out of the company — for a while — but she would consult with her professor; she would go to law, she would fight like the liveliest of all the Furies before she would be thrust aside, and scorned and belittled, simply because she was a woman.

Then the door swung open, and the treasurer came in.

The treasurer was a gray little failure whose ability had been caught and passed, quite twenty years ago, by the calendar of progress. To-day he still had his title, but in practise he was hardly more important than an office-boy; he drew a salary instead of a pension because he was the sort of man who dies as soon as the harness is taken off and lives forever if he has an occupation. (There was one other reason, too: the company was too poor to pay the pension.) He was systematically bullied by his own bookkeeper and patronized by his own clerk, and in the last few minutes they had told him something which rocked him to his innermost soul. They had told him the rumor that after the annual meeting, on the first of the year, he was to be replaced by a younger man; and when the buzzer had called him to the private office he was already marching in that direction, to demand the facts from headquarters.

For thirty-eight years he had come into the presence of his chief with due humility; this afternoon, with all his fear and resentment on the surface, he came and banged the door behind him.

"Looky here, Arnold, the boys say I'm goin' to be let out the first of January! Is that so?"

Chapin glanced at the girl, apprehensively. "That's all right, Jim. I — —"

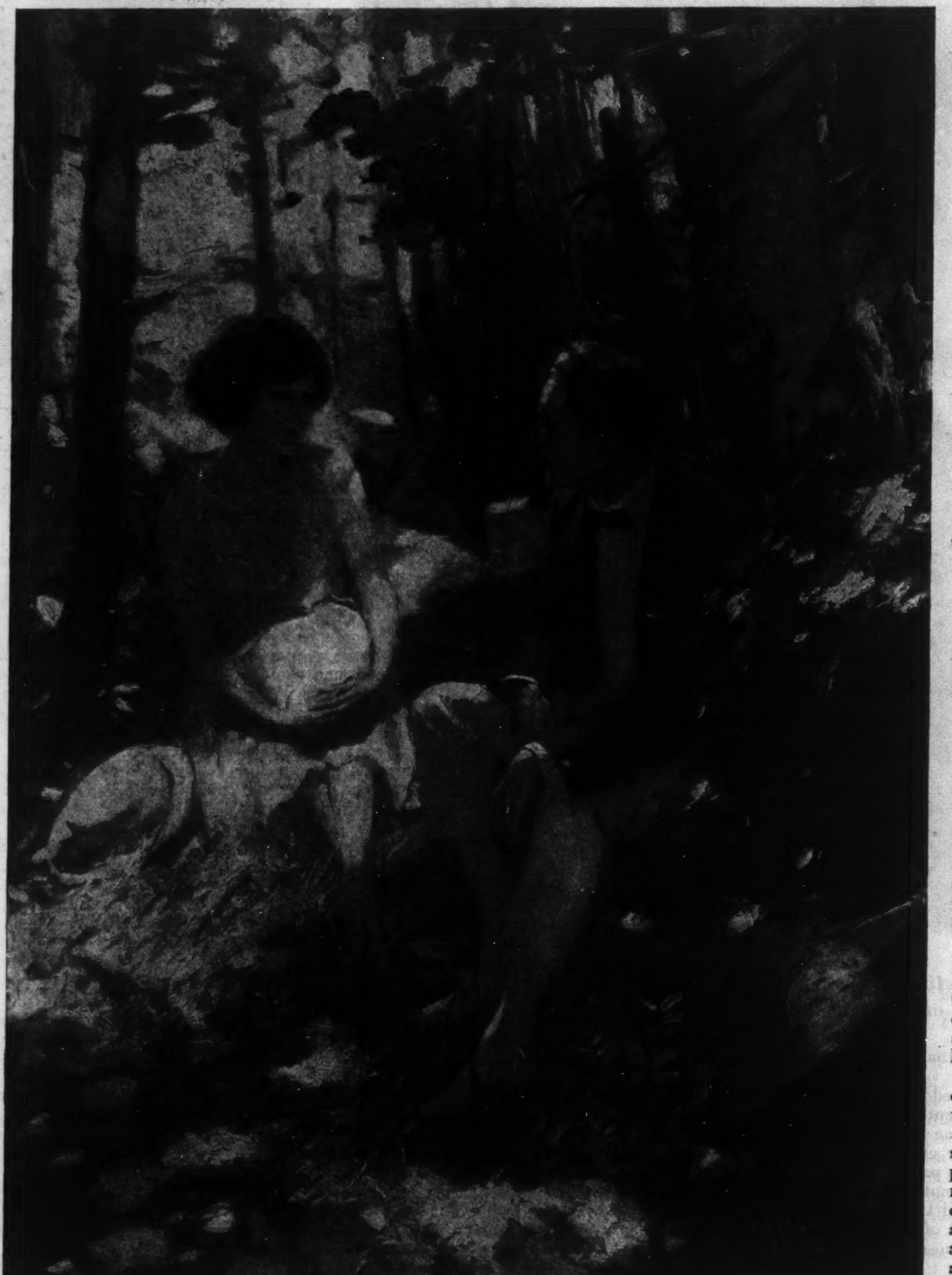
"You say it's '*all right*'! What kinda talk's *that?* Makes me sick. I — —"

Chapin's voice was peremptory. "That'll do for now, Jim. I want you to meet Miss Cloud — Henry Cloud's niece."

The old man turned, surprisedly. "Oh — didn't see you was there, ma'am. Howdy you do?" He was as pert as a sparrow. "So this is the young lady wants to help run Chapin and Comp'ny, is it?" He stared at her, unwinking. "Well, young lady, I been in this office longer'n Arnold Chapin's been alive. I was the first man hired. I knew your uncle when he et with a napkin in his neck, same's the rest of us. I got two shares of stock, and they never paid me one soumarkee, and I didn't count at the meetin's, and I guess I'm considerable of a joke 'round here. But the boys outside just told me Arnold said I was gettin' to be a nuisance, and he was goin' to put in a younger man for treasurer, and keep me on here for a sort of *charity*." He glared at Chapin. "*Was* you?"

"We can't discuss that now, Jim. We — —"

"Well, *why* can't we?"



"Hate you? Hate you?" Chapin cleared his throat nervously. "Why — why, I've loved you ever since the first few days!"

MISS CLOUD laughed in her throat. "Because Mr. Chapin wants you to tell me that you'll vote against me to keep me from being an officer, or something. He's much more worried about keeping a woman out than he is about keeping an old employee *in*."

"*O-ho*," said the treasurer, smartly. He glanced at Chapin and back at Miss Cloud, and suddenly caught a flash of inspiration. "*O-ho!* Sort o' seems as if my two votes *might* begin to count for somethin', *don't* it?" He selected a chair, and sank back luxuriously. "Well, far's *I'm* concerned, we're all here, ain't we? Might's well dicker it out now's well's any other time, hadn't we?"

Chapin gazed at him, dumbly. He would have ordered him out of the room, but he didn't dare; for Chapin was very heavily involved, and the old man had a tactical advantage. "What do you mean?" he inquired, coldly. "Do you expect to sit there like an auctioneer, and have Miss Cloud and me bid against each other for your infernal two shares?"

"Wouldn't *sell* 'em — now," said the old man, craftily. "They're goin' to be my insurance. Point is, *somebody*'s got to guarantee me my job for as long's I live, or I'll be *mean*." He inclined his head toward Miss Cloud. "Young lady, do *you* think it's fair for me to work thirty-eight years and be let out like that?"

She smiled back at him. "Well, do *you* think it's fair for me to own as much stock as I do, and not be a director, and a vice-president, if I want to be?"

They both looked at Chapin. "That's our platform, Arnold," said Waldron defiantly. "All we want's just what's fair and right and reasonable. That's so, ain't it, Miss? So it's up to you to play fair, Arnold, or by George! the young lady an' I'll make a team! Come on, Arnold. She won't clutter up the office any more'n I do. Ain't she *entitled* to it? *I* say so. Ain't I entitled to a square deal? *I* say so. . . . What do *you* say?"

Ten minutes later, the old man shook hands with Miss Cloud, and made his exit, head up, chest out, brimming with the consciousness of importance. On the other side of the threshold, his mood collapsed as though a pin had pricked it; but already he had overturned three destinies, and the day had no more need of him.

Chapin was looking out over the harbor. "Will it make your — triumph — any more complete," he asked dryly, "if I tell you that as a treasurer, Jim Waldron's a cartoon — a burlesque — and that I've been beaten, and humiliated by a man who'd have been fired ten years ago, if it weren't for sheer sentiment?"

Miss Cloud rose, tardily. "And yet you were ready to beat *me*, and humiliate *me*, by using him, weren't you? It didn't need to happen this way. Ordinarily, I wouldn't *care* to stay where I'm not welcome. But you treated me — oh, you acted just as everybody else acts to a woman who seriously wants to *do* things, and — —"

"Please, Miss Cloud! At least you can give me credit for common honesty. I'm working for the good of the company."

"But you and I *are* the company, aren't we?"

"No. We're only the owners. If the company isn't bigger than all of us put together, it's a pretty punk company."

"Still," she said, subdued, "it may not be as bad as you think it is. Some people think I'm — rather efficient."

"That's immaterial, isn't it? It wasn't mentioned before, as I recall it."

Miss Cloud stiffened. "I'm awfully sorry we have to start like this. Aren't you?"

"You're magnanimous."

Mentally, she shrugged her shoulders. "I'll come to-morrow morning, then."

"If I were a fool," he said, "*or* if I'd been able to save any money, *or* if this company weren't the most vital thing in my life, I'd have my resignation neatly typed and ready for you. . . . Instead of that, I'll simply say —" He bowed over her hand, while she wondered what was coming next — "I'll simply say — 'Good afternoon'."

In the elevator, she told herself that being a Power wasn't as exhilarating as her favorite professor had advertised.

Her spontaneity had quite gone out of her, and she actually debated whether she wouldn't write Chapin a note to say that she had changed her mind, and turned her ambitions into rubbish. Then, after a while, her pride rolled back, and gathered momentum, and came on again, irresistibly. Chapin had managed to kill off all her eagerness and fresh impulse, and he had left her with only the sodden pleasure of conquest; but she decided, before morning, that she wouldn't let him prevent her from hunting her ideals. To surrender to him, when the first skirmish had been so wholly in her favor, would merely be to discount her own aims.

Nevertheless, she was nervous when she approached the office, and Chapin's manner, which was courtly, didn't deceive her.

"If you'll tell me where you want your desk, I'll have one brought in. My father and I used to share this room, so I guess it'll be big enough. If it isn't, one of us will have to camp out on the fire-escape. Unfortunately, we're a bit cramped for space."

"WHATEVER won't disturb *you*. . . . Only if it doesn't make any difference, I'd like to sit where I can see the harbor."

"Certainly. You own exactly as much of the view as I do."

She had a curious impression that he was on the point of laughing at his own minuteness in the matter of equity; but when she looked at him, his face was heavy and immobile. He sent for a desk and chair, and had them moved about from one location to another until Miss Cloud, remembering an episode in "The Taming of the Shrew", became suspicious of his motive. He appeared deeply concerned about the style of pen she used; he was solicitous in regard to ink; he apologized, twice, for the quality of the stationery; and he remarked that, hereafter, he would see that the windows were washed more frequently. As Miss Cloud sat down a pair of tiny, vertical lines were occupying the interval between her eyebrows.

Chapin came over with a handful of papers, which he arranged neatly on her blotter.

"The first thing is for you to know what you're getting into. . . . Here's a statement of condition as of July first; please notice that item of 'good-will', in the assets. When we have to put in good-will at a hundred thousand, it simply means we're a hundred thousand in the hole. . . . Here's an inventory; and here's a maintenance report; please notice those two letters pinned to it. The engineer of the *Currituck* wants about thirty thousand dollars' worth of new equipment — boiler, tail-shaft, and what not — and the *Wessaguscus* needs everything from point to gearing . . . The ships have to be kept in shape, and that costs money, and we haven't any money. . . . Here's yesterday's balance sheet; please notice the cash, and the bills and notes payable (incidentally, I've been drawing one week's salary every month, lately) and the bills receivable . . . I'm very glad you're so young and energetic, Miss Cloud. I'm only thirty-one, myself, but they say that anxiety dries the blood more than age or sorrow."

She fumbled with the papers, and the tiny lines grew deeper on her forehead. "Why — the company's in an *awfully* bad condition, isn't it?"

"Bad condition?" he repeated, cheerfully. "Oh, yes, indeed. South American freight's so low that if it goes any lower we'll probably have to suspend. Of course, if you're philosophical, you can say that suspension would be the end of all our worries. Now about the Eastern routes. . . . There's enough tonnage in New York to-day to carry four times as much freight as anybody wants to ship East, so we can take our choice between dry-docking the *Wessaguscus* and ordering repairs we can't pay for, or else clearing for Yokohama in ballast, and taking a chance of picking up a cargo there. It's what I'd call a very slim chance. Maybe you wonder why I haven't wound up our affairs, and quit. But you see, we've got these three rusty old mechanical iron playthings that used to be steamships, and if we tried to sell 'em to anybody, we might be indicted for conspiracy." He went back to his own desk. "So in the name of Chapin and Company," he said, with unction, "I greet you as a half owner of a very healthy deficit, and a job lot of overdue accounts, and thirty-eight years' accumulation of disappointment. If you own anything else except your share of the view, I don't happen to know about it."

For several minutes she fingered the typewritten pages and thought of money-power. "If it's as hopeless as all that, why haven't you given it up long ago, and gone into something different?"

"PURE GALL," said Chapin, over his shoulder. "Gall and conceit. I thought I could do the impossible."

"Then — I can't see why you felt so badly about *my* being here."

He compressed his lips. "A man likes to stand or fall on his own responsibility."

"Why, yes — but if he *knows* he's failing — —"

Chapin whirled around toward her. "Who says I've failed? Haven't I kept this outfit going for eight years? It's darned near a miracle — a miracle. Sometimes I can't believe it's true. No capital, no ships, no organization — and when I took hold, we were a hundred and *ninety* thousand in the hole. I've cut that in half. God knows how. But now it's crawling back again. And if you can't understand why I wanted to be let alone with it — I can't tell you."

Miss Cloud was puzzled. "You were — in worse shape than this when you started?"

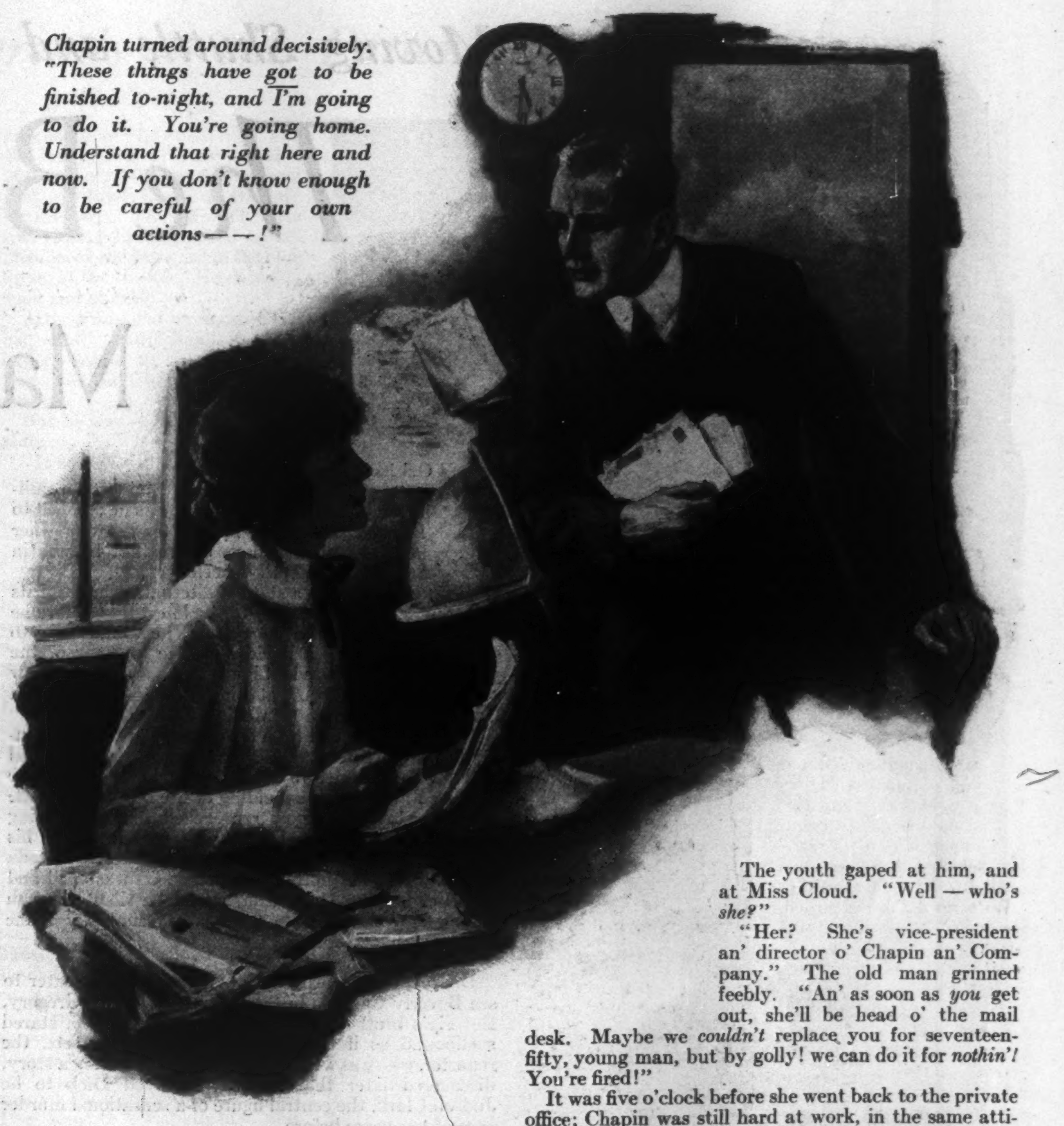
"My father," said Chapin, "was one of the finest men — and one of the rottenest *business* men — I ever met. This company was his baby; and the older it got the worse it behaved. He spoiled it, and I'm trying to reform it. My idea's simply been to drag it up by main strength to where he wanted it to be. Pay off the debt he got us into. Show a profit to your uncle — or whoever owned the rest of the stock. Put us in the front rank of shipping concerns, where he dreamed we'd be. It's *his* name on the sign; it's got to mean something. And if I've had such hard sledding when I *wasn't* bothered — —"

"Oh!" she said softly. "It isn't just selfishness, then? And — not wanting a woman around?"

Without replying, Chapin swung back to his desk, and plunged into his morning's correspondence. She watched him, intently. His appearance and his deportment both gave testimony that by continuous overwork he had burned out most of his carbons, and that he was running low on reserve. Miss Cloud's eyes became shadowed, and presently she arose, and went out so quietly that Chapin never lifted his head.

She went out to the big, bare room where Waldron was squeaking, ineffectively, at his bookkeepers, and she smiled and beckoned to him. His mood to-day was normal; the revolution had subsided, and his moment of independence had passed into history. When she beckoned, he came as promptly as if she had pulled a string.

"Come here, please. . . . Just between you and me, Mr. Waldron, if you were going to learn the shipping business, right from the ground up, where would you start?"



Chapin turned around decisively. "These things have got to be finished to-night, and I'm going to do it. You're going home. Understand that right here and now. If you don't know enough to be careful of your own actions — —!"

The old man cocked his head at the ceiling, and scowled reflectively. "Openin' mail."

"Very well. . . . Who opens it now?"

While she was speaking, an overgrown youth had swaggered around a partition and up to the bookkeeper's desk. "Say, you tell Sunny Jim I got to get a boost, will you? Tell him I won't stick unless I draw twenty, beginnin' Monday."

"That's him," said the treasurer. "He's the one does it."

The bookkeeper said something in an undertone, and the boy, glancing sidewise, lowered his voice, but not enough. "Fire your grandmother! . . . He ain't got the nerve — and who'd run the mailin' desk and do all the work *I* do for seventeen-fifty? Huuh?"

Miss Cloud leaned over to the treasurer. "What else does that boy do here?"

"Oh . . . compares bills o' ladin' — hunts up rates — sort o' helps around."

"Go over there and discharge him."

Mr. Waldron quivered. "D-discharge . . . why, I — why, he — —"

She gestured, impatiently. "Go over there and do it . . . *now!*"

Mr. Waldron's expression was pitiable. "Why, I never fired a man — —"

She took him firmly by the arm. "You do what I tell you. He thinks we can't get along without him. Tell him to get his hat and go out — and then you show me about the mail, and what a bill of lading is, and what you compare it with — and I'll see if *I* can't sort of help around, too. . . . Are you a director in this company, and let yourself be bossed by a little brat like that?"

The treasurer grew pink. He wavered, but authority was back of him. He looked appealingly at Miss Cloud, and got no relief. At length, he cleared his throat, and advanced, with a scowl which he hoped was menacing. "I — I guess you're resigned," he said, uncertainly, to the young clerk. "I guess you better get your time, and get out." His courage oozed away, and he jerked his thumb backward. "Lady says so."

The youth gaped at him, and at Miss Cloud. "Well — who's *she?*"

"Her? She's vice-president an' director o' Chapin an' Company." The old man grinned feebly. "An' as soon as *you* get out, she'll be head o' the mail desk. Maybe we *couldn't* replace you for seventeen-fifty, young man, but by golly! we can do it for *nothin'!* You're fired!"

It was five o'clock before she went back to the private office; Chapin was still hard at work, in the same attitude as when she had left him, and although he must have known where she had been, he didn't refer to her absence — indeed, he didn't speak to her at all. To be sure, she hadn't expected praise from him; but inasmuch as she had waived her right to think in terms of administration, and chosen to think in terms of clerical work (for the good of the company), she was feeling a little more unappreciated than ever. She put on her hat, found her gloves and vanity case, and moved toward the door. "Good night, Mr. Chapin."

He rose just out of his chair, and immediately sank back again. "Good night, Miss Cloud."

She paused, thoughtfully. "How late do you stay here — as a general thing?"

"How late? Anywhere from six to midnight."

"But you shouldn't do that!"

"Humph. I shouldn't starve to death, either. That is — voluntarily."

SHE considered the value of humor, and made an experiment. "Wouldn't it be fairer for each of us to be *half*-starved — as long as we own an equal interest — and have you stop working so hard?"

To a spectator, he might seem to have ignored her, but when she closed the door, she was conscious of a queer little thrill of achievement. In view of all the attendant circumstances, her first day had been moderately successful. She had learned the true condition of the company, she had made the acquaintance of a bill of lading, and she had wrung an unguarded smile — transient, but genuine — out of Arnold Chapin.

For a week she astonished herself by sorting mail enthusiastically. At nine o'clock she said good morning to Chapin, and at five she said good night to him; for the rest of the day, she made life miserable for every one within range of her queries. Now and then, among a flock of strictly commercial questions, she asked something about Chapin and his history, and she was so very casual and tactful about it that usually she got the information she wanted.

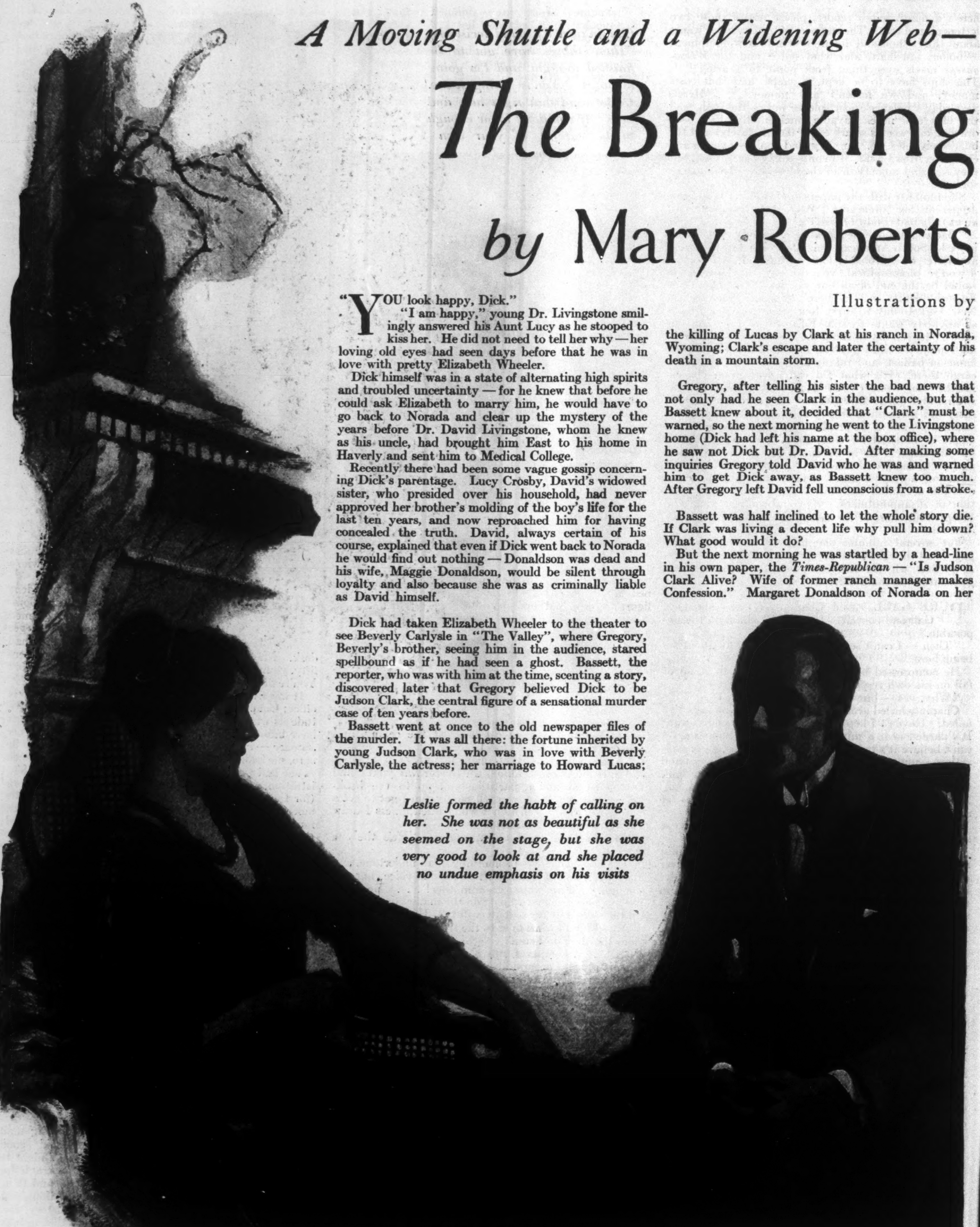
It was Waldron, of course, who gave her the bulk of the facts. Waldron told her [*Continued on page 47*]

A Moving Shuttle and a Widening Web—

The Breaking

by Mary Roberts

Illustrations by



Leslie formed the habit of calling on her. She was not as beautiful as she seemed on the stage, but she was very good to look at and she placed no undue emphasis on his visits

"YOU look happy, Dick."

"I am happy," young Dr. Livingstone smilingly answered his Aunt Lucy as he stooped to kiss her. He did not need to tell her why — her loving old eyes had seen days before that he was in love with pretty Elizabeth Wheeler.

Dick himself was in a state of alternating high spirits and troubled uncertainty — for he knew that before he could ask Elizabeth to marry him, he would have to go back to Norada and clear up the mystery of the years before Dr. David Livingstone, whom he knew as his uncle, had brought him East to his home in Haverly and sent him to Medical College.

Recently there had been some vague gossip concerning Dick's parentage. Lucy Crosby, David's widowed sister, who presided over his household, had never approved her brother's molding of the boy's life for the last ten years, and now reproached him for having concealed the truth. David, always certain of his course, explained that even if Dick went back to Norada he would find out nothing — Donaldson was dead and his wife, Maggie Donaldson, would be silent through loyalty and also because she was as criminally liable as David himself.

Dick had taken Elizabeth Wheeler to the theater to see Beverly Carlysle in "The Valley", where Gregory, Beverly's brother, seeing him in the audience, stared spellbound as if he had seen a ghost. Bassett, the reporter, who was with him at the time, scenting a story, discovered later that Gregory believed Dick to be Judson Clark, the central figure of a sensational murder case of ten years before.

Bassett went at once to the old newspaper files of the murder. It was all there: the fortune inherited by young Judson Clark, who was in love with Beverly Carlysle, the actress; her marriage to Howard Lucas; the killing of Lucas by Clark at his ranch in Norada, Wyoming; Clark's escape and later the certainty of his death in a mountain storm.

Gregory, after telling his sister the bad news that not only had he seen Clark in the audience, but that Bassett knew about it, decided that "Clark" must be warned, so the next morning he went to the Livingstone home (Dick had left his name at the box office), where he saw not Dick but Dr. David. After making some inquiries Gregory told David who he was and warned him to get Dick away, as Bassett knew too much. After Gregory left David fell unconscious from a stroke.

Bassett was half inclined to let the whole story die. If Clark was living a decent life why pull him down? What good would it do?

But the next morning he was startled by a head-line in his own paper, the *Times-Republican* — "Is Judson Clark Alive? Wife of former ranch manager makes Confession." Margaret Donaldson of Norada on her

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Fate Adds More Threads to the Pattern of the Mystery

Point

Rinehart

T. D. Skidmore

deathbed stated that ten years before, just after the tragedy at the Clark ranch, her husband had found Jud Clark in a cabin in the mountains very ill. He had cared for him for several days, had then returned and sent her to nurse Clark, Donaldson himself remaining at home to allay suspicion. She further stated that a strange man had come to the cabin and had helped her to care for Clark. Her confession had ended there; she had died carrying her further knowledge with her.

The article went on to say that Judson Clark was undoubtedly alive, free of punishment, and dependent on his own efforts for a living, as his estate had gone to charities.

THE whole situation turned on the deposition of Mrs. Donaldson, now dead. The local authorities at Norada maintained that the woman had not been sane for several years. On the other hand, the cabin to which she referred was well known, and no search of it had been made at the time. Clark's horse had been found not ten miles from the town, and the cabin was buried in snow twenty miles farther away. If Clark had made that journey on foot he had accomplished the impossible.

Certain facts, according to the local correspondent, bore out Margaret Donaldson's confession. Inquiry showed that she was supposed to have spent the winter following Judson Clark's crime with relatives in Omaha. She had returned to the ranch the following spring.

A detailed description of Judson Clark and a photograph of him accompanied the story. Bassett reread the article carefully, and swore a little, under his breath. If he had needed confirmation of his suspicions, it lay in his hand. But the situation had changed overnight. There would be a search for Clark now, as wide as the knowledge of his disappearance. Local police authorities would turn him up in every city from Maine to the Pacific coast. Even Europe would be on the lookout, and South America.

But it was not the police he feared so much as the press. Not all of the papers, but some of them, would go after that story, and send their best men on it. It offered, not so much a chance of solution, as an opportunity to revive the old dramatic story. He could see, when he closed his eyes, the local photographers climbing to that cabin and later sending its pictures broadcast, and divers gentlemen of the press, eager to pit their wits against ten years of time and the ability of a once conspicuous man to hide from the law, packing their suitcases for Norada.

No, he couldn't stop now. He would go on, like the others, and with this advantage, that he was morally certain that he could lay his hands on Clark at any time. But he would have to prove his case, connect it. Who, for instance, was the other man in the cabin? He must have known who the boy was who lay in the rough bunk, delirious. Must have suspected, anyhow. That made him, like the Donaldsons, accessory after the fact, and criminally liable. Small chance of his coming out with any confession. Yet he was the connecting link. Must be.

On his third reading the reporter began to visualize the human elements of the fight to save the boy; he saw moving before him the whole pitiful struggle; the indomitable ranch manager, his heart-breaking struggle with the blizzard; the shooting of his horse; the careful disarming of suspicion; and later the intrepid woman, daring that night ride through snow that had sent the posse back to its firesides, to the boy, locked in the cabin and raving.

His mind was busy as he packed his suitcase. Already he had forgotten his compunctions of the early morning; he moved about methodically, calculating roughly what expense money he would need, and the line of attack, if any, needed at the office. Between Norada and that old brick house at Haverly lay his story. Ten years of it. He was closing his bag when he remembered the little girl in the blue dress, at the theater. He straightened and scowled.

After a moment he snapped the bag shut. Damn it all, if Clark had chosen to tie up with a girl that was on Clark's conscience, not his.

But he was vaguely uncomfortable.

"It's a queer world, Joe," he observed to the waiter, who had come in for the breakfast dishes.

"Yes, sir. It is *that*," said Joe.

During all the long night Dick sat by David's bedside. Earlier in the evening there had been a consultation; David had suffered a light stroke, but there was no paralysis, and the prognosis was good. For this time, at least, David had escaped, but there must be no other time. He was to be kept quiet and free from worry, his diet was to be carefully regulated, and with care he still had long years before him.

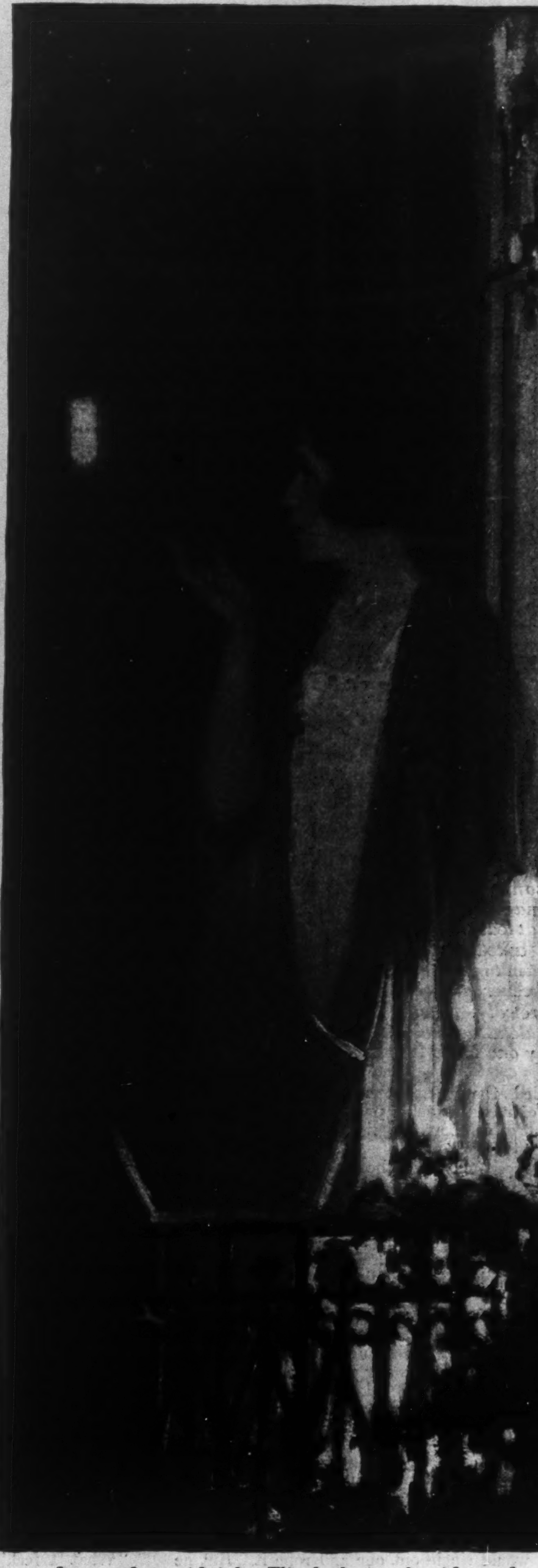
David slept, his breathing heavy and slow. In the morning there would be a nurse, but that night Dick, having sent Lucy to bed, himself kept watch. On the walnut bed lay Doctor David's portly figure, dimly outlined by the shaded lamp, and on a chair drawn close sat Dick.

He was wide-awake and very anxious, but as time went on and no untoward symptoms appeared, as David's sleep seemed to be more natural, Dick's thoughts wandered. They went to Elizabeth first, and then on and on from that starting-point, through the years ahead. He saw the old house with Elizabeth waiting in it for his return; he saw both their lives, united and flowing on together, with children, with small cares, with the routine of daily living, and behind it all the two of them, hand in hand.

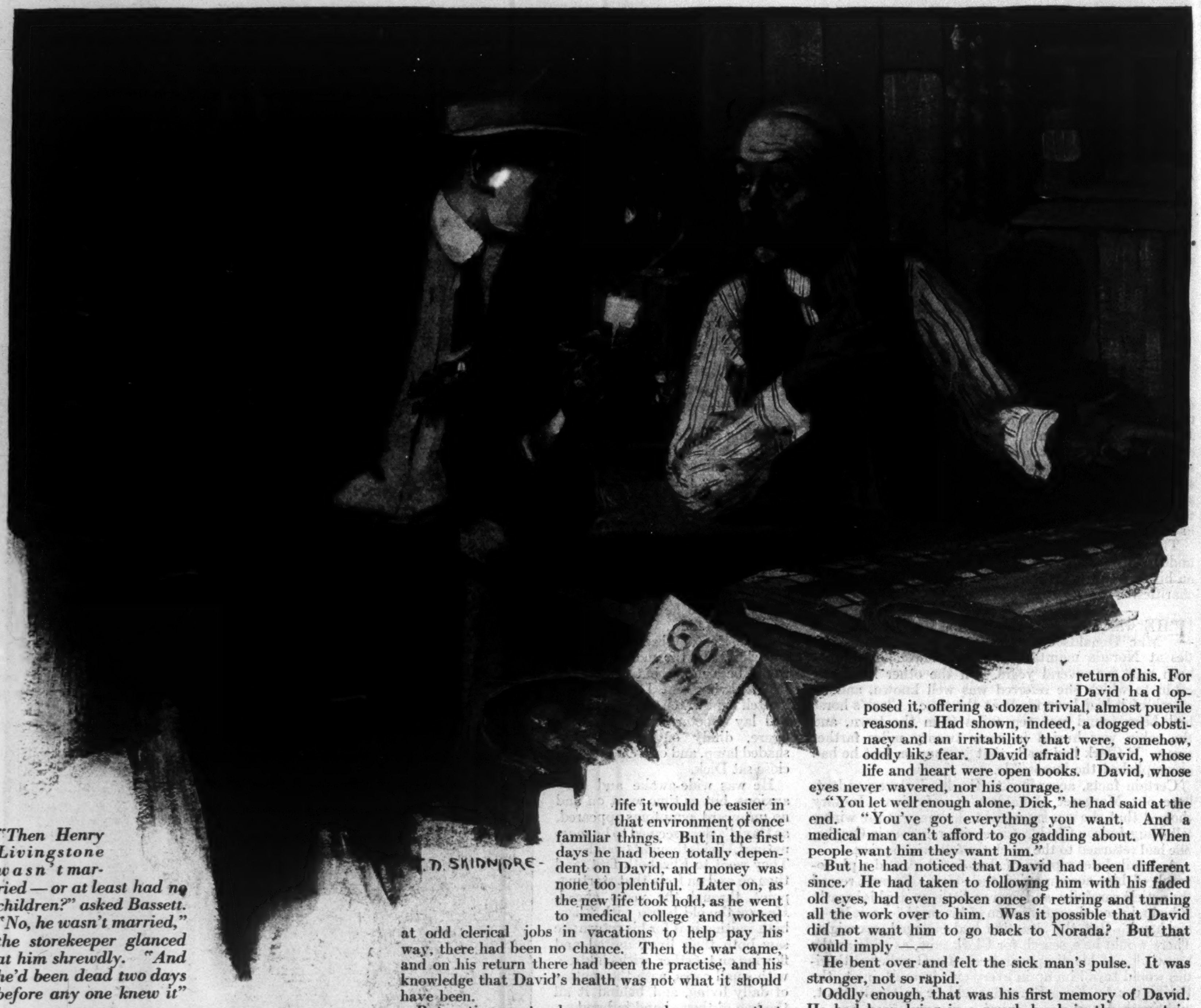
Then his mind turned on himself. How often in the past ten years it had done that. He had sat off, with a sort of professional detachment, and studied his own case. With the entrance into his world of the new science of psychoanalysis, he had made now and then small, not very sincere attempts to penetrate the veil of his own unconscious devising. Not very sincere, for with the increase of his own knowledge of the mind, he had learned that behind such conditions as his lay generally, deeply hidden, the desire to forget. And that behind that there lay, acknowledged or not, fear.

"But to forget what?" he used to say to David, when the first textbooks on the new science appeared, and he and David were learning the new terminology, Dick eagerly and David with contemptuous snorts of derision. "To forget what?"

"You had plenty to forget," David would say, stolidly. "I think this man's a fool, but at that — you'd had your father's death for one thing. And you'd gone pretty close to the edge of eternity yourself. You'd fought



Long after midnight Elizabeth stood wide-eyed on her tiny balcony. From it in daylight she could see the Livingstone house. Now it was invisible, but an upper window was outlined in the light. Very shyly she kissed her finger-tips to it. "Good-night, dear," she whispered



"Then Henry Livingstone wasn't married — or at least had no children?" asked Bassett. "No, he wasn't married," the storekeeper glanced at him shrewdly. "And he'd been dead two days before any one knew it"

single-handed the worst storm of ten years, you came out of it with double pneumonia, and you lay alone in that cabin about fifty-six hours. Forget! You had plenty to forget."

He had accepted that theory without question, finally. There seemed, indeed, nothing to question. He had gone shooting in the mountains, a month or so after his father's death, and had there been caught and almost died. David, searching for him, had found and cared for him with the aid of a woman from the ranch, and had helped him to co-ordinate such memories as remained to him.

Curiously enough, they all referred to his childhood. There had been David's brother, his father, a rather elderly man who had taught him to ride. And there had been a tutor, a young man who was afraid of a horse, and who used to take him on long walks. The ranch had seemed enormous, and he remembered being with the elderly man one day on a mountain top, and being told that a good bit of all the land in sight would be his one day. There were other things, too, not so clear. His mother, a shadowy memory of a tall woman who was mostly in bed; horses and dogs; a corral with a high fence and sometimes cattle, sometimes horses, milling around inside it, while men on horseback would single out one and rope it. But he could not remember any names at all.

He had a general impression that there had been plenty of money in those days. He could hardly have told how he felt that. But the ranch had been sold on his father's death and had barely paid the creditors.

He had had, at times since he came east, an occasional desire to go back and see that early home again. Later on, he knew that if he were ever to fill up the gap in his life it would be easier in that environment of once familiar things. But in the first days he had been totally dependent on David, and money was none too plentiful. Later on, as the new life took hold, as he went to medical college and worked at odd clerical jobs in vacations to help pay his way, there had been no chance. Then the war came, and on his return there had been the practise, and his knowledge that David's health was not what it should have been.

But as time went on he was more and more aware that there was in him a peculiar shrinking from going back, almost an apprehension. He knew more of the mind than he had before, and he knew that not physical hardship, but mental stress, caused such lapses as his. But what mental stress, in a boy of twenty-two or so, could be great enough for such a smash?

He was obliged to face this also, and he did it with distaste. He had never found himself lacking in courage. Certainly he would have fought a man who called him a coward. But there was cowardice behind all such conditions as his; a refusal of the mind to face reality. It was weak. Weak. He hated himself for that past failure of his to face reality.

BUT that night, sitting by David's bed, he faced reality with a vengeance. He was in love, and he wanted the things that love should bring to a normal man. He felt normal. He felt, strengthened by love, that he could face whatever life had to bring, so long as it also brought Elizabeth.

He had taken his fears to David that Sunday night and David had scoffed at them.

"Don't be a fool," he had said. "Go ahead and take her, if she'll have you. And don't be too long about it. I'm not as young as I used to be."

"What I feel," he had replied, "is this: I don't know, of course, if she cares." David had grunted. "I do know I'm going to try to make her care, if it — if it's in the wood. But I'd like to go back to the ranch again, David, before things go any further."

"Why?"

"I'd like to fill the gap. Attempt it anyhow."

What he was thinking about, as he sat by David's bedside, was David's attitude toward that threatened return of his. For David had opposed it, offering a dozen trivial, almost puerile reasons. Had shown, indeed, a dogged obstinacy and an irritability that were, somehow, oddly like fear. David afraid! David, whose life and heart were open books. David, whose eyes never wavered, nor his courage.

"You let well enough alone, Dick," he had said at the end. "You've got everything you want. And a medical man can't afford to go gadding about. When people want him they want him."

But he had noticed that David had been different since. He had taken to following him with his faded old eyes, had even spoken once of retiring and turning all the work over to him. Was it possible that David did not want him to go back to Norada? But that would imply ——

He bent over and felt the sick man's pulse. It was stronger, not so rapid.

Oddly enough, that was his first memory of David. He had been lying in a rough bunk in the mountain cabin, and David beside him on a wooden box had been bending forward and feeling his pulse. He had felt very weak and utterly inert, and he knew now that he had been very ill. The cabin had been a small and lonely one, with snow-peaks not far above it, and it had been very cold. During the day a woman kept up the fire. Her name was Maggie, and she moved about the cabin like a thin ghost. At night she slept in a lean-to shed, and David kept the fire going. A man who seemed to know him well — John Donaldson, he learned, was his name — was Maggie's husband, and every so often he came, about dawn, and brought food and supplies.

After a long time, as he grew stronger, Maggie had gone away, and David had fried the bacon and heated the canned tomatoes or the beans. Before she left she had written out a recipe for biscuits, and David would study over it painstakingly, and then produce a panful of burned and blackened lumps, over which he would groan and agonize.

He himself had been totally incurious. He lived a sort of animal life of food and sleep, and later on of small tentative excursions around the room on legs that shook when he walked. The snows came and almost covered the cabin, and David had read a great deal, and talked at intervals. David had tried to fill up the gap in his mind. That was how he learned that David was his father's brother, and that his father had recently died.

Going over it all now, it had certain elements that were not clear. They had, for instance, never gone back to the ranch at all. With the first clearing of the snow in the spring John Donaldson had appeared again, leading two saddled horses and driving a pack animal and they had started off, leaving him standing in the clearing and staring after them. But they had not followed Donaldson's trail. They had started west, over the mountains, and David did not know the country. Once they were lost for three days.

He looked at the figure on the bed. Only ten years, and yet at that time David had been vigorous, seemed almost young. He had aged in that ten years. On the bed he was an old man, a tired old man at that. On that long ride he had been tireless. He had taken the burden of the nightly camps, and had hacked a trail with his hatchet across snow-fields, while Dick, still weak but furiously protesting, had been compelled to stand and watch.

Now, with the perspective of time behind him, and with the clearly defined issue of David's protest against his return to the west, he again went over the details of that winter and spring. Why had they not taken Donaldson's trail? Or gone back to the ranch? Why, since Donaldson could make it, had not other visitors come? Another doctor, the night he almost died, and David sat under the lamp behind the close-screened windows, and read the very pocket prayer-book that now lay on the stand beside the bed? Why had they burned his clothes, and Donaldson brought a new outfit? Why did Donaldson, for all Dick's requests, never bring a razor, so that when they struck the railroad, miles from anywhere, they were both full bearded?

HE brought himself up sharply. He had allowed his imagination to run away with him. He had been depicting a flight, and no one who knew David could imagine him in flight.

Nevertheless, he was conscious of a new uneasiness and anxiety. When David recovered sufficiently, he would go to Norada, as he had told Elizabeth, and there he would find the Donaldsons, and clear up the things that bothered him. After that — —

He thought of Elizabeth, of her sweetness and sanity. He remembered her at the theater the evening before, lost in its fictitious emotions, its counterfeit drama. He had felt moved to comfort her, when he found her on the verge of tears.

"Just remember, they're only acting," he had said.

"Yes. But life does do things like that to people."

"Not often. The theater deals in the dramatic exceptions to life. You and I, plain bread-and-butter people, come to see these things because we get a sort of vicarious thrill out of them."

"Doesn't anything ever happen to the plain bread-and-butter people?"

"A little jam, sometimes. Or perhaps they drop it, butter-side down, on the carpet."

"But that is tragedy, isn't it?"

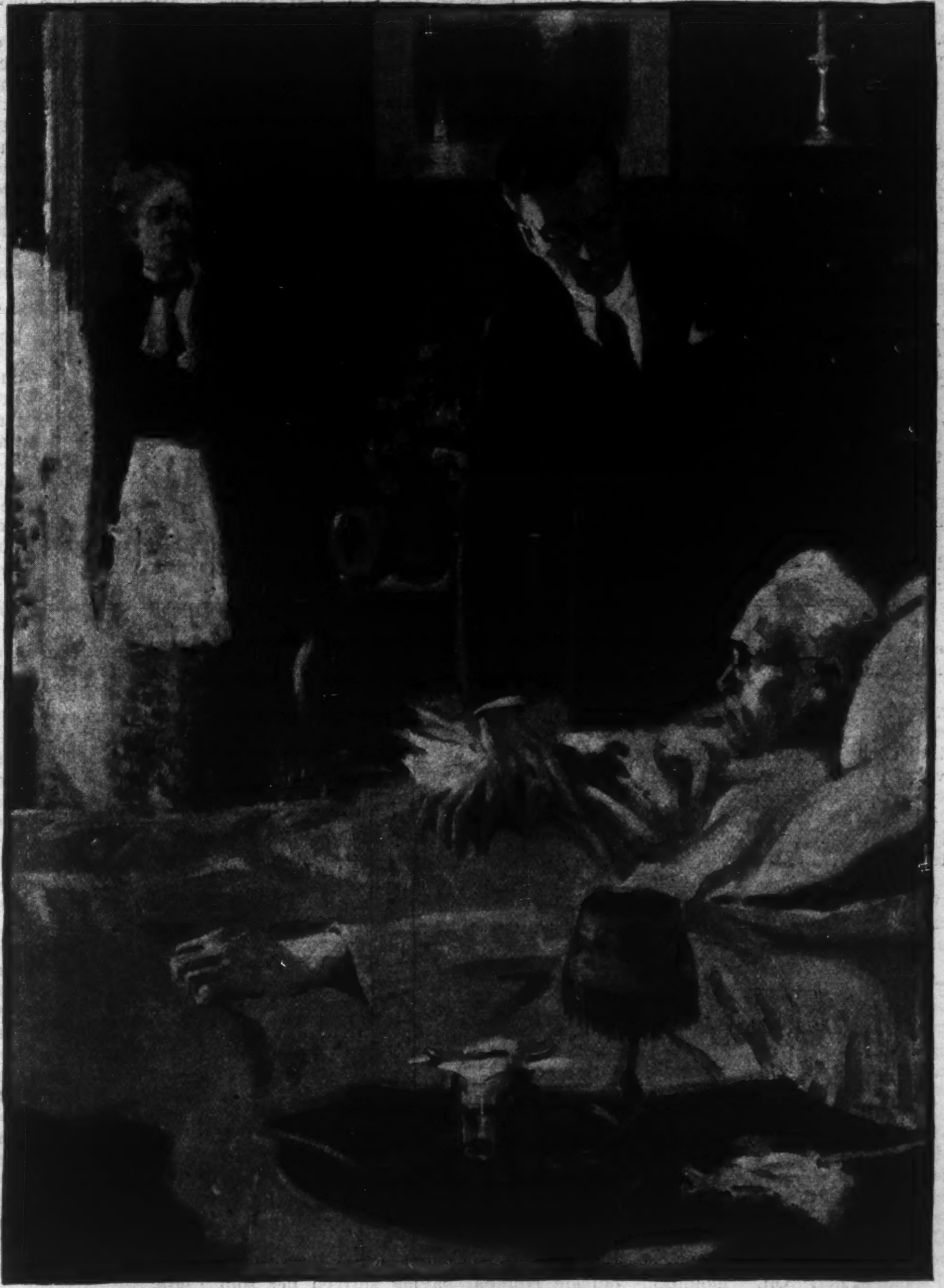
He had had to acknowledge that it might be. But he had been quite emphatic over the fact that for the most part people didn't drop it.

After a long time he slept in his chair. The spring wind came in through the open window and fluttered the leaves of the old prayer-book on the stand.

The week that followed was an anxious one. David's physical condition slowly improved. The slight thickness was gone from his speech, and he sipped resignedly at the broths Lucy or the nurse brought at regular intervals. Over the entire house there hung all day the odor of stewing chicken or of beef tea in the making, and above the door-bell was a white card which said: "Don't ring. Walk in."

As it happened, no one in the old house had seen Maggie Donaldson's confession in the newspaper. Lucy was saved that anxiety, at least. Appearing, as it did, the morning after David's stroke, it came in with the morning milk, lay about unnoticed, and passed out again, to start a fire or line a pantry shelf. Harrison Miller, next door, read it over his coffee. Walter Wheeler in the eight-thirty train glanced at it and glanced away. Nina Ward read it in bed. And that was all.

There came to the house a steady procession of inquirers and bearers of small tribute, flowers and jellies mostly, but other things also. A table in David's room held a steadily growing number of bedroom slippers, and Mrs. Morgan had been seen buying soles for still others. David, propped up in his bed, would cheer a little at these votive offerings, and then relapse again into the heavy, troubled silence that worried Dick and frightened Lucy Crosby. Something had happened, she was sure. Something connected with Dick. She watched David when Dick was in the room, and she saw that his eyes followed the younger man with a sort of terror in them.



David, propped up in bed, would relapse into a heavy troubled silence that worried Dick and frightened Lucy Crosby. Something had happened she was sure. Something connected with Dick

And, for the first time since he had walked into the house that night so long ago, followed by the tall young man, for whose coming a letter had prepared her, she felt that David had withdrawn himself from her. She went about her daily tasks, a little hurt, and waited for him to choose his own time. But, as the days went on, she saw that, whatever this new thing was, he meant to fight it out alone, and that the fighting it out alone was bad for him. He improved very slowly.

She wondered, sometimes, if it was, after all, because of Dick's growing interest in Elizabeth Wheeler. She knew that he was seeing her daily, although he was too busy now for more than a hasty call. She felt that she could even tell when he had seen her; he would come in, glowing and almost exalted, and as if to make up for the moments stolen from David, would leap up the stairs two at a time and burst into the invalid's room like a cheerful cyclone. Wasn't it possible that David had begun to feel as she did, that the girl was entitled to a clean slate before she pledged herself to Dick? And the slate — poor Dick — could never be cleaned.

Then one day David astonished them. He was propped up in his bed, and he had demanded a cigar, and been very gently but firmly refused. He had been rather sulky about it, and Dick had been attempting to rally him into better humor, when he said suddenly:

"I've had time to think things over, Dick," he said. "I haven't been fair to you. You're thrown away here. Besides —" he hesitated. Then: "We might as well face it. The day of general practitioner has gone."

"I don't believe it," Dick said stoutly. "Maybe we are only sign-posts to point the way to the other fellows, but the world will always need sign-posts."

"What I've been thinking of," David pursued his own train of thought, "is this: I want you to go to Johns Hopkins and take up the special work you've been wanting to do. I'll be up and around in a week."

"Call the nurse, Aunt Lucy," said Dick. "He's raving."

"Not at all," David retorted testily. "I've told you. This whole town only comes here now to be told what specialist to go to, and you know it."

"I don't know anything of the sort."

"If you don't, it's because you won't face the facts."

Dick chuckled, and threw an arm over David's shoulder.

"You old hypocrite!" he said. "You're trying to get rid of me, for some reason. Don't tell me you're going to get married!"

But David did not smile. Lucy, watching him from her post by the window, saw his face and felt a spasm of fear. At the most she had feared a mental conflict in David. Now she saw that it might be something infinitely worse, something impending and immediate. She could hardly reply when Dick appealed to her.

"ARE you going to let him get rid of me like this, Aunt Lucy?" he demanded. "Sentenced to Johns Hopkins, like Napoleon to St. Helena! Are you with me, or forninst me?"

"I don't know, Dick," she said, with her eyes on David. "If it's for your good — —"

She went out after a time, leaving them at it hammer and tongs. David was vanquished in the end, but Dick, going down to the office later on, was puzzled. Somehow, it was borne in on him that behind David's insistence was a reason, unspoken but urgent, and the only reason that occurred to him as possible was that David did not, after all, want him to marry Elizabeth Wheeler. He put the matter to the test that night, wandering in, as was his custom before going to bed, in dressing-gown and slippers, for a brief chat. The nurse was down-stairs, and Dick moved about the room restlessly. Then he stopped and stood by the bed, looking down.

"A few nights ago, David, I asked you if you thought it would be right for me to marry; if my situation justified it, and if to your knowledge there was any other reason why I could not or should not. You said there was not."

"There is no reason, of course. If she'll have you."

"I don't know that. I know that whether she will or not is a pretty vital matter to me, David."

David nodded, silently.

"But now you want me to go away. To leave her. You're rather urgent about it. And I feel — well, I begin to think you have a reason for it."

David clenched his hands, under the bedclothing, but his eyes met Dick fairly.

"She's a good girl," he said. "And she's entitled to more than you can give her, the way things are."

"That is presupposing that she cares for me. I haven't an idea that she does. That she may, in time — Then, that's the reason for this Johns Hopkins thing, is it?"

"That's the reason," David said stoutly. "She would wait for you. She's that sort. I've known her all her life. She's as steady as a rock. But she's been brought up to have a lot of things. Walter Wheeler is well off. You do as I want you to; pack your things and go to Baltimore. Get Reynolds down here to look after the work until I'm around again."

But Dick evaded the direct issue thus opened, and followed another line of thought.

"Of course, you understand," he observed, after a renewal of his restless pacing, "that I've got to tell her my situation first. I don't need to tell you that I funk doing it, but it's got to be done."

"Don't be a fool," said David querulously. "You'll set a lot of women cackling, and what they don't know they'll invent. I know 'em."

"Only herself and her family."

"Why?"

"Because they've got a right to know it."

But when he saw David formulating a further protest, he dropped the subject.

"I'll not do it until we've gone into it together," he promised. "There's plenty of time. You settle down now and get ready for sleep."

When the nurse came in at eleven o'clock she found Dick gone and David very still, with his face to the wall.

Vicente Blasco Ibañez

Will be back in McClure's next month with a short story of eloquent mold — its setting among the folk who dwell in the foothills of the beautiful and terrible Andes mountains.

The great Spaniard's output of short stories each year is limited. He wrote three last year and McClure's printed them.

The Widow's Loan

is the first he has written this year, and it is for

October McClure's 15 cents

It was the end of May before David began to move about his upper room. The trees along the shaded streets had burst into full leaf by that time, and Mike was enjoying that gardener's interval of paradise when flowers grow faster than the weeds beside them. Harrison Miller, having rolled his lawn through all of April, was heard abroad in the early mornings with the lawn mower or, hoe in hand, was to be seen behind his house in his vegetable patch.

Cars rolled through the streets, the rear seats laden with blossoming loot from the country lanes, and the Wheeler dog was again burying bones in the soft, warm ground under the hedge.

Elizabeth Wheeler was very happy. Her look of expectant waiting, once vague, had crystallized now into definite form. She was waiting, timidly and shyly, but with infinite content. In time everything would come. And in the meantime there was to-day, and sometime to-day a shabby car would stop at the door, and there would be five minutes, or ten. And then Dick would have to hurry to work, or back to David. After that, of course, to-day was over, but there would always be to-morrow.

Now and then, at choir practise or at service, she saw Clare Rossiter. But Clare was very cool to her, and never on any account sought her, or spoke to her alone. She was rather unhappy about Clare, when she remembered her. Because it must be so terrible to care for a man who only said, when one spoke of her, "Oh, the tall blonde girl?"

Once or twice, too, she had found Clare's eyes on her, and they were hostile eyes. It was almost as though they said: "I know I told you. But if you ever tell him, I'll kill you."

Yet, somehow Elizabeth found herself not entirely believing that Clare's passion was real. Because, the real thing you hid, with all your might, at least until you were sure it was wanted. After that, of course, you could be so proud of it that you might become utterly shameless. She was afraid sometimes that she was the sort who would be utterly shameless.

Yet, for all her halcyon hours, there were little things that worried her. Wallie Sayre, for instance, always having to be kept from saying things she didn't want to hear. And Nina. She wasn't sure that Nina was entirely happy. And, of course, there was Jim. Jim was difficult. Sometimes he was a man, and then again he was a boy, and one never knew just which he was going to be. He was too old for discipline and too young to manage himself. He was spending almost all his evenings away from home now, and her mother always drew an inaudible sigh when he was spoken of.

Elizabeth had waited up for him one night, only a short time before, and beckoning him into her room, had talked to him severely.

"You ought to be ashamed, Jim," she said. "You're simply worrying mother sick."

"Well, why?" he demanded defiantly. "I'm old enough to take care of myself."

"You ought to be taking care of her, too."

He had looked rather crestfallen at that, and before he went out he offered a half-sheepish explanation.

"I'd tell them where I go," he said, "but you'd think a pool-room was on the direct road to hell. Take to-night, now, I can't tell them about it, but it was all right. I met Wallie Sayre at the club, and Leslie, before dinner, and we got a fourth and played bridge. Les telephoned Nina, and we had dinner. I swear we were going on playing, but somebody brought in a chap named Gregory for a cocktail. He turned out to be a brother of Beverly Carlysle, the actress, and he took us around to the theater and gave us a box. Not a thing wrong with it, was there?"

"Where did you go from there?" she persisted, inexorably. "It's half-past one."

"Went around and met her. She's a queen, Elizabeth. But do you know what would happen if I told them? They'd have a fit."

She felt rather helpless, because she knew he was right, from his own standpoint.

"I know. I'm surprised at Les, Jim."

"Oh, Les. He just trailed along. He's all right."

She kissed him and he went out, leaving her to lie awake for a long time. She would have had all her world happy, those days, and all her world good. She didn't want anybody's bread and butter spilled on the carpet.

SO the days went on, and the web slowly wove itself into its complicated pattern. Bassett speeding west, and David in his quiet room; Jim Wheeler and Leslie Ward seeking amusement, and finding it in the littered dressing-room of a woman star at a local theater; Clare Rossiter brooding, and the little question being whispered behind hands, figuratively, of course—the village was entirely well bred; Gregory calling round to see Bassett, and turning away with the information that he had gone away for an indefinite time. And Maggie Donaldson lying in the cemetery at the foot of the mountains outside Norada, having shriven her soul to the limit of her strength so that she might face her Maker.

Out of all of them it was Clare Rossiter who made the first conscious move of the shuttle. Clare, affronted and not a little malicious, but perhaps still dramatizing herself, this time as the friend who feels forced to carry bad tidings. Behind even that, however, was an unconscious desire to see Dick again, and this time so to impress herself on him that never again could he pass her in the street unnoticed.

On the day, then, that David first sat up in bed Clare went to the house and took her place in the waiting-room. She was dressed with extreme care, and she carried a parasol. With it, while she waited, she drilled small nervous indentations in the old office carpet, and formulated her line of action.

Nevertheless, she found it hard to begin.

"I don't want to keep you, if you're busy," she said, avoiding his eyes. "If you are in a hurry — —"

"This is my business," he said patiently. And waited.

"I wonder if you are going to understand me, when I do begin?"

"You sound alarmingly ominous." He smiled at her, and she had a moment of panic. "You don't look like a young lady with anything eating at her damask cheek. Or however it goes."

"Doctor Livingstone," she said suddenly, "people are saying something about you that you ought to know."

He stared at her, amazed and incredulous.

"About me? What can they say? That's absurd."

"I felt you ought to know. Of course I don't believe it. Not for a moment. But you know what this town is."

"I know it's a very good town," he said steadily. "However, let's have it. I dare say it is not very serious."

She was uneasy enough by this time and rather frightened when she had finished. For he sat, quiet and rather pale, not looking at her at all, but gazing fixedly at an old daguerreotype of David that stood on his desk. One that Lucy had shown him one day and that he had preempted, David at the age of eight, in a small black velvet suit and with very thin legs.

"I thought you ought to know," she justified herself, nervously.

Dick got up.

"Yes," he said. "I ought to know, of course. Thank you."

When she had gone he went back and stood before the picture again. From Clare's first words he had a stricken conviction that the thing was true. That, as Mrs. Cook Morgan's visitor from Wyoming had insisted, Henry Livingstone had never married, never had a son. He stood and gazed at the picture. His world had collapsed about him, but he was steady and very erect.

"David, David!" he thought. "Why did you do it? And what am I? And who?"

But whatever David had done, his motive had been right. Dick would have to start with that. If David had built for him a false identity, it was because there was a reason, then. Something shameful, something he was to be taken away from. Wasn't it probable that David had heard the gossip, and had then collapsed? Wasn't the fear that he himself would hear it behind David's insistence that he go to Baltimore?

His thoughts flew to Elizabeth. Everything was changed now, as to Elizabeth. He would have to be very certain of that past of his before he could tell her that he loved her, and he had a sense of immediate helplessness. He could not go to David, as things were. To Lucy?

Probably he would have gone to her at once, but the telephone rang. He answered it, got his hat and bag and went out to the car. After all, his work was the first thing; after that, his own concerns.

At half-past six Lucy heard him come in, and go into his office. When he did not immediately reappear and take his flying run up the stairs to David's room, she stood outside the office door and listened. She had a premonition of something wrong, something of the truth, perhaps. Anyhow, she tapped at the door and opened it, to find him sitting very quietly at his desk, with his head in his hands.

"Dick," she exclaimed. "Is anything wrong?"

"I have a headache," he said. He looked at his watch and got up. "I'll take a look at Uncle David, and then we'll have dinner. I didn't know it was so late."

But when she had gone out he did not immediately move. He had been going over again, painfully and carefully, the things that puzzled him, now that he thought about them at all. David and Lucy's reluctance to discuss his father; the long days in the cabin, with David helping him to reconstruct his past; the spring, and that slow progress which now he felt, somehow, had been an escape.

He ate very little dinner, and Lucy's sense of dread increased. When, after the meal, she took refuge in her sitting-room on the lower floor and picked up her knitting, it was with a conviction that it was only a temporary reprieve. She did not know from what.

She heard him, some time later, coming down from David's room. But he did not turn into his office. Instead, he came on to her door, stood for a moment in the doorway like a man undecided, then came in. She did not look up at him, even when, very gently, he took her knitting from her and laid it on the table.

"Aunt Lucy?"

"Yes, Dick."

[*Continued on page 41*]

The Best of All Possible Worlds

by Sir Oliver Lodge

Ugly Because Incomplete, Imperfection Rampant and Obvious, the Philosopher Argues that the Result Is Still Beyond Anything that Could Possibly Have Been Attained in Any Other Way

Illustration by Lejaren A. Hiller

CAN there be any meaning in such a phrase, or is it the outcome of an unreasoning optimism? However it was originally used, it seems to me that "the best of all possible worlds" is a description capable of definition and comprehension, and need not be regarded as absurd. No one looking at the evil and cruelty and abominations which in many parts of the planet are rife — no one can possibly suppose that the earth is perfect or anywhere near perfection; and many have felt inclined to arraign the Deity for permitting so much evil to exist, or else have ventured to deny that there could be a beneficent Creator at all. Undoubtedly there is much evil, much human sin, and every variety of imperfection. Even the Saints have felt smitten with a sense of guilt, and of falling far below their own ideals. How then can it be said that the world is the best possible that could have been made under the circumstances?

The last three words are important. Given the conditions, the world is as good as it could be made — that is the meaning of the phrase at the head of this article; and we must consider what those conditions are.

Given, for the sake of argument, an omnipotent God, it is clear that a perfect piece of machinery could have been constructed; one that would never go wrong, but would execute the behest of its designer with absolute regularity forever.

Even a man can make mechanism so perfect that it will continue to keep time with regularity for years and years. There is nothing at all inconceivable about perfection of mechanism; and if the planet were designed and constructed on mechanical lines, then it, too, might have been perfect. So far as it consists of inorganic and lifeless materials it is perfect already; every atom obeys the forces acting on it with absolute precision; there is no trace of rebellion or self-will in inorganic nature.

The future of the world looms so majestic that all the suffering, all the tedious stages through which it must pass are more than justified

THE difficulty comes in when life and mind have to be taken into account. Directly an element of self-determination or free-will is introduced, everything becomes much more complex. If humanity is free, if it be once granted a charter of freedom, it must be free to go wrong as well as to go right. It cannot be coerced. If it be forced to go right, like mechanism, there would be no merit in its actions — nor any sense of responsibility. Beings constructed on mechanical lines might be mechanically perfect, but their perfection would be of a low order. In no sense could they ever develop into creatures fit for companionship with Deity. They would be lower even than savages possessing the power of self-determination; for there would be no future before them, no possibilities of heroic achievement, nothing to relieve the deadly monotony of mechanical perfection.

The problem of creation was a much higher one than that. We must assume that the scheme involved the gradual creation of a race of free beings endowed with a spark of the divine, a race with a knowledge of good and evil, with a power of choice. Determined in their actions by motives and intentions, truly, but self-determined; not kept in grooves by an alien power, but free to roam over the board, to go through the whole gamut of conduct, to make mistakes, to find out their errors, to perceive for themselves the destructiveness of sin, the merit and safety of virtue, and to choose for themselves the path they ultimately take.

Such a race may go grievously wrong, it may fall into pathetic blunders, it may commit atrocious crimes, but it has an infinite potentiality before it. It may rise till it becomes as gods; it may fall till it becomes as devils.

The whole power of Deity is impotent to coerce such a race of free beings into anything like perfection. The charter of freedom has been granted and cannot be abrogated. The risk must be run. For better for worse, they must decide their own destiny.

They can be influenced, helped, guided, led; yes; but not pushed, impelled, or forced. Even the Highest can only reach them by example, by precept, by warning, by instruction. The highest of the race may be made use of to instruct and awaken their fellows. All manner of wholesome influences may be rained upon them. But if they will not hear, if they will not mend their own ways, if they will not look up and ask for aid, all those efforts may be wasted and lost upon them.

The world is as good as it could be made under those conditions.

But was the risk worth running? It is not for us to judge with anything approaching Divine foresight, and yet we can see that if such a race ultimately does emerge from error, really does set itself along noble paths — if it decides to go right, because of its free choice in that direction, because it willed to do so, and not because it must — then the creation of such a race might be infinitely worth while; for the standard of achievement will ultimately become something higher than we can readily imagine.

It is no great act of faith to assume that to a Vision so far-sighted and patient that it could wait four hundred million years for the appearance of a human race upon this planet, the outcome of a free and responsible race of beings such as can, in the long process of future time, be evolved, looms so majestic and lofty that all the sin and suffering, all the tedious stages through which we now and for many centuries must pass, are more than justified.

This planet can still look forward to millions of years of habitable temperature. The sun shows no sign of fading for another twenty million years; who can say what in that period may not be accomplished?

MOREOVER, progress is growing constantly more rapid. Man has become a conscious agent in the management of things. Men will already sacrifice all they possess in pursuit of high and unselfish ends; as we have seen in the war.

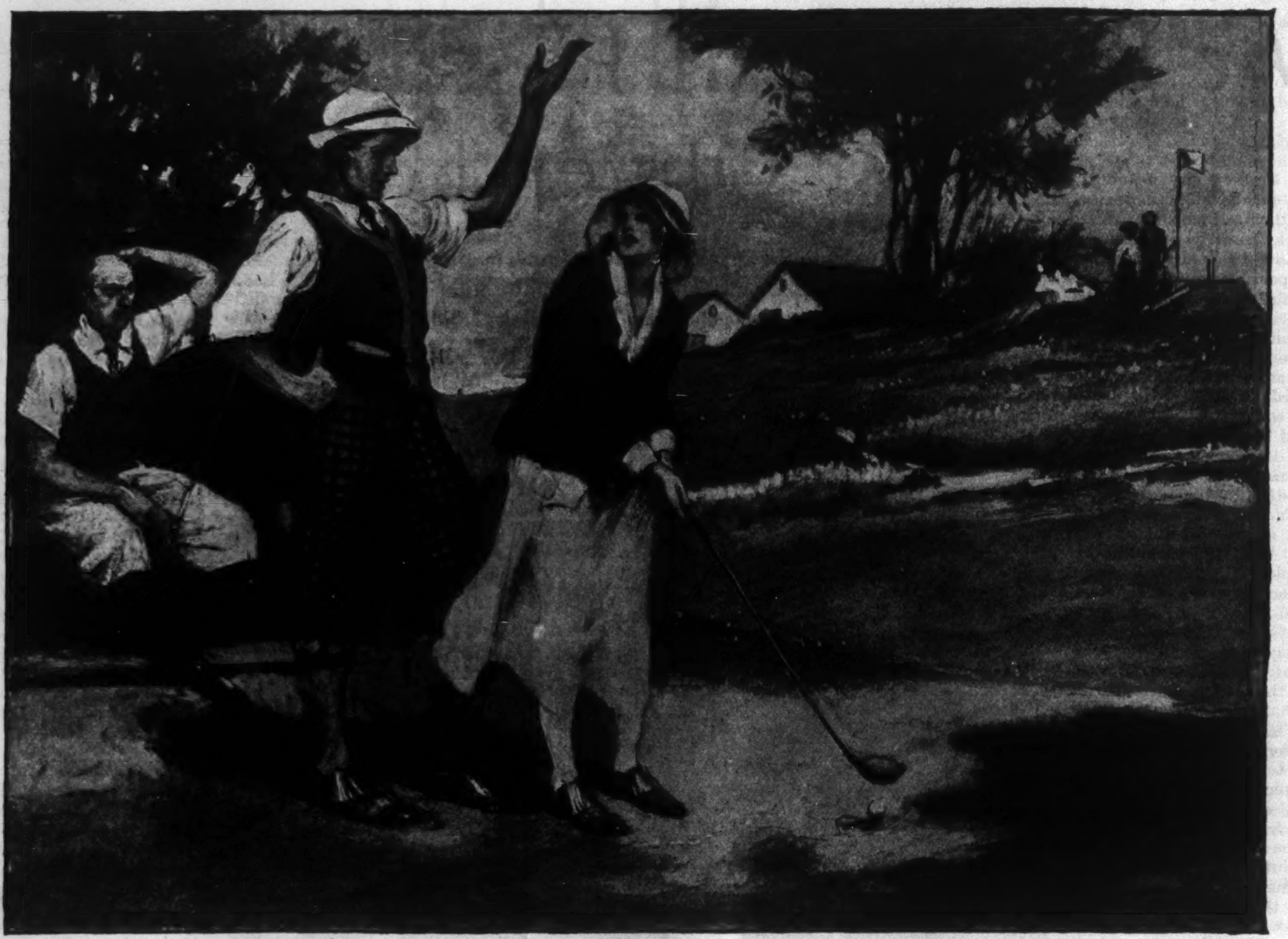
Hope is in the air, we can co-operate in Divine plan, we can help and stimulate each other. Weak and erring mortals as we are, yet we feel within us infinite possibilities.

The future lies large and splendid before us, both before the race and before individuals, too. The frustrated struggle of our earth life is not forever. Progress is possible both for the individual and the race, and the ultimate Destiny of Man is so lofty that in the long last we shall look back upon all this travail, this long effort to bring to birth a truly Divine race, and be satisfied that all the intermediate stages, all its imperfections, its terrible trials and griefs, are stages inevitable toward the attainment of the main result — the attainment of perfection not by compulsion but by free will.

The present state of the world is but a step in the age-long process. Imperfection is rampant and obvious, yet already we catch more than a glimmering of hope, and perceive that the end and aim are far beyond anything that could have been attained in any other way. The world — desperately imperfect as it now is — is yet the best world that could have so far been constructed. It is an embryo, not a finished product. It is ugly because incomplete. The finished product is far ahead. The intermediate stages have to be gone through. It is our mission and privilege to help and hasten the process, but it cannot be unduly hurried. Not even God can hasten it beyond what our free will permits. He can see the ultimate outcome, he can inspire us with some dim vision of it, and so help us on the steep and thorny way to the realization of it.

Let no man presume to say that this world is less good than it might have been made. That would be blasphemy. Given the conditions and the ultimate aim, and the present incompleteness, then we may confidently assert that at its present stage the world is the best of all that were possible, under the conditions and subject to the ultimate hope.

In that sense, and in that sense only, this is the best of all possible worlds.



"At the second tee George discoursed on the beauties of nature. I can see poor Celia's tortured face even now. But she breathed no word of reproach. Such is the miracle of woman's love"

The Salvation of George Mackintosh

Who Prattled on the Links and Paid the Price

by P. G. Wodehouse

Illustrations by Lee Conrey

THE young man came into the club-house and flung his bag moodily into a corner. There was a frown on his usually cheerful face, and he ordered a ginger-ale in the sort of voice which an ancient Greek would have used when asking the executioner to bring on the hemlock. He sank into a chair and stared straight in front of him.

Sunk in the recesses of his favorite settee, the Oldest Member had watched him with silent sympathy.

"How did you make out?" he inquired.

"He beat me."

The Oldest Member nodded his venerable head.

"You have had a trying time, if I am not mistaken. I feared as much when I saw you go out with Pobsley. How many a young man have I seen go out with Herbert Pobsley exulting in his youth, and crawl back at eventide looking like a toad under the harrow! He talked?"

"All the time, confound it. Put me right off my stroke."

The Oldest Member sighed.

"The talking golfer is undeniably the most pronounced pest of our complex modern civilization," he said, "and the most difficult to deal with. It is a melancholy thought that the noblest of games should have produced such a scourge. I have frequently marked Herbert Pobsley in action. As the crackling of thorns under a pot. . . . He is almost as bad as poor George Mackintosh in his worst period. Did I ever tell you about George Mackintosh?"

"I don't think so."

"His," said the Sage, "is the only case of golfing garrulity I have ever known where a permanent cure was effected. If you would care to hear about it? . . ."

George Mackintosh (said the Oldest Member), when I first knew him, was one of the most admirable young fellows I have ever met. A handsome, well setup man with no vices except a tendency to use the mashie for shots which should have been made with the light iron. And, as for his positive virtues, they were too numerous to mention. He never swayed his body, moved his head, or pressed. He was always ready to utter a tactful grunt when his opponent foozled. And when he himself achieved a glaring fluke, his self-reproachful click of the tongue was music to his adversary's bruised soul. But, of all his virtues, the one that most endeared him to me and to all thinking men was the fact that, from the start of a round to the finish, he never spoke a word except when absolutely compelled to do so by the exigencies of the game. And it was this man who subsequently, for a black period which lives in the memory of all his contemporaries, was known as Gabby George and became a shade less popular than the germ of Spanish Influenza. Truly, *corruptio optimi pessima!*

One of the things that saddens a man as he grows older and reviews his life is the reflection that his most devastating deeds were generally the ones which he did with the best motives. The thought is disheartening. I can honestly say that, when George Mackintosh came to me and told me his troubles, my sole desire was to ameliorate his lot. That I might be starting on the downward path a man whom I liked and respected never once occurred to me.

I was reading my Braid on the Push-Shot one night after dinner, when George Mackintosh came in. I could see at once that there was something on his mind, but what this could be I was at a loss to imagine, for I had been playing with him myself all the afternoon and he had done an eighty-one and a seventy-nine. And, as I had not left the links till dusk was beginning to fall, it was practically impossible that he could have gone out again and done badly. The idea of financial trouble seemed equally out of the question. George had a good job with the old-established legal firm of Peabody, Peabody, Peabody, Peabody, Cootes, Toots, and Peabody. The third alternative, that he might be in love, I rejected at once. In all the time I had known him, I had never seen a sign that George Mackintosh gave a thought to the opposite sex.

Yet this, bizarre as it seemed, was the true solution. Scarcely had he seated himself and lit a cigar when he blurted out his confession.

"What would you do in a case like this?" he said.

"Like what?" I asked.

"Well. . . ." He choked, and a rich blush permeated his surface. "Well, it seems a silly thing to say and all that, but I'm in love!"

"I see no objection to that," I said. "If she is worthy of you . . . ."

"Worthy!" He gasped. "She would be worthy of Harry Vardon!"

"Indeed?"

"She won the Ladies' Medal last month."

"You are in love with Celia Tennant?"

"Of course I am. I've got eyes, haven't I? Who else is there that any sane man could possibly be in love with? That," he went on moodily, "is the whole trouble. There's a field of about twenty-nine, and I should think my place in the betting is about thirty-three to one."

"I cannot agree with you there," I said. "You have every advantage, it appears to me. You are young, amiable, good-looking, comfortably off, scratch . . ."

"But I can't talk, confound it!" he burst out. "And how is a man to get anywhere at this sort of game without talking?"

"You are talking perfectly fluently now."

"Yes, to you. But put me in front of Celia Tennant, and I simply make a sort of gurgling noise like a sheep with the bots. It kills my chances stone dead. You know these other men. I can give Claude Mainwaring a third and beat him. I can give Eustace Brinkley a stroke a hole and simply trample on his corpse. But when it comes to talking to a girl, I'm not in their class."

"You must not be diffident."

"But I *am* diffident. What's the good of saying I mustn't be diffident when I'm the man who wrote the words and music, when diffidence is my middle name and my telegraphic address? I can't help being diffident."

"Surely you could overcome it?"

"But how? It was in the hope that you might be able to suggest something that I came round to-night."

AND THIS was where I did the fatal thing. It happened that, just before I took up Braid on the Push-Shot, I had been dipping into the current number of a magazine, and one of the advertisements, I chanced to remember, might have been framed with a special eye to George's unfortunate case. It was that one which treats of How to Become a Convincing Talker. I picked up this magazine now and handed it to George.

He studied it for a few minutes in thoughtful silence. He looked at the picture of the man who had taken the course being fawned upon by lovely women while the man who had let this opportunity slip stood outside the group gazing with a wistful envy.

"They never do that to me," said George, dejectedly.

"Do what, my boy?"

"Cluster round, clinging cooingly."

"I gather from the letter-press that they will if you write for the booklet."

"You think there is really something in it?"

"I see no reason why eloquence should not be taught by mail. One seems to be able to acquire every other desirable quality in that manner nowadays."

"I might try it. After all, it's not expensive. There's no doubt about it," he murmured, returning to his perusal, "that fellow does look popular. Of course, the evening dress may have something to do with it."

"Not at all. The other man, you will notice, is also wearing evening dress, and yet he is merely among those on the outskirts. It is simply a question of writing for the booklet."

"Sent post free."

"Sent, as you say, post free."

"I've a good mind to try it."

"I see no reason why you should not."

"I will, by Duncan!" He tore the page out of the magazine and put it in his pocket. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give this thing a trial for a week or two, and at the end of that time I'll go to the boss and see how he reacts when I ask for a raise of salary. If he crawls, it'll show there's something in this. If he flings me out, it will prove the thing's no good."

We left it at that, and I am bound to say — owing, no doubt, to my not having written for the booklet of the Memory Training Course advertised on the adjoining page of the magazine — the matter slipped from my mind. When, therefore, a few weeks later, I received a telegram from young Mackintosh, which ran

"*Worked like magic*"

I confess I was intensely puzzled. It was only a quarter of an hour before George himself arrived that I solved the problem of its meaning.

"So the boss crawled?" I said, as he came in.

HE gave a light, confident laugh. I had not seen him, as I say, for some time, and I was struck by the alteration in his appearance. In what exactly this alteration consisted, I could not, at first, have said; but gradually it began to impress itself on me that his eye was brighter, his jaw squarer, his carriage a trifle more upright than it had been. But it was his eye that struck me most forcibly. The George Mackintosh I had known had had a pleasing gaze, but, though frank and agreeable, it had never been more dynamic than a poached egg. This new George had an eye that was a combination of a gimlet and a searchlight. Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, I imagine, must have been somewhat similarly equipped. The Ancient Mariner stopped a wedding-guest on his way to a wedding: George Mackintosh gave me the impression that he could have stopped the Twentieth Century Limited on its way to Chicago. Self-confidence — aye, and more than self-confidence — a sort of sinful, overbearing swank seemed to exude from his very pores. Even at this early stage of the proceedings, I was not sure that I altogether approved of the change.

"Crawled?" he said. "Well, he didn't actually lick my boots, because I saw him coming and side-stepped: but he did everything short of that. I hadn't been talking an hour when . . ."

"An hour!" I gasped. "Did you talk for an hour?"

"Certainly. You wouldn't have had me be abrupt, would you? I went into his private office and found him alone. I think at first he would have been just as well pleased if I had retired. In fact, he said as much. But I soon adjusted that outlook. I took a seat and a cigarette, and then I started to sketch out for him the history of my connection with the firm. He began to wilt before the end of the first ten minutes. At the quarter of an hour mark he was looking at me like a lost dog that's just found its owner. By the half-hour he was making little belating noises and massaging my coat sleeve. And, when, after perhaps an hour and a half, I came to my peroration and suggested a raise, he choked back a sob, gave me double what I had asked, and invited me to dine at his club next Tuesday. I'm a little sorry now I cut the thing so short. A few minutes more and I fancy he would have given me his sock-suspenders and made over his life-insurance in my favor."

"Well," I said, as soon as I could speak, for I was finding my young friend a trifle overpowering, "this is most satisfactory."

"So-so," said George. "Not un-so-so. A man wants an addition to his income when he is going to get married."

"Ah!" I said. "That, of course, will be the real test."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, when you propose to Celia Tennant. You remember you were saying when we spoke of this before . . . ."

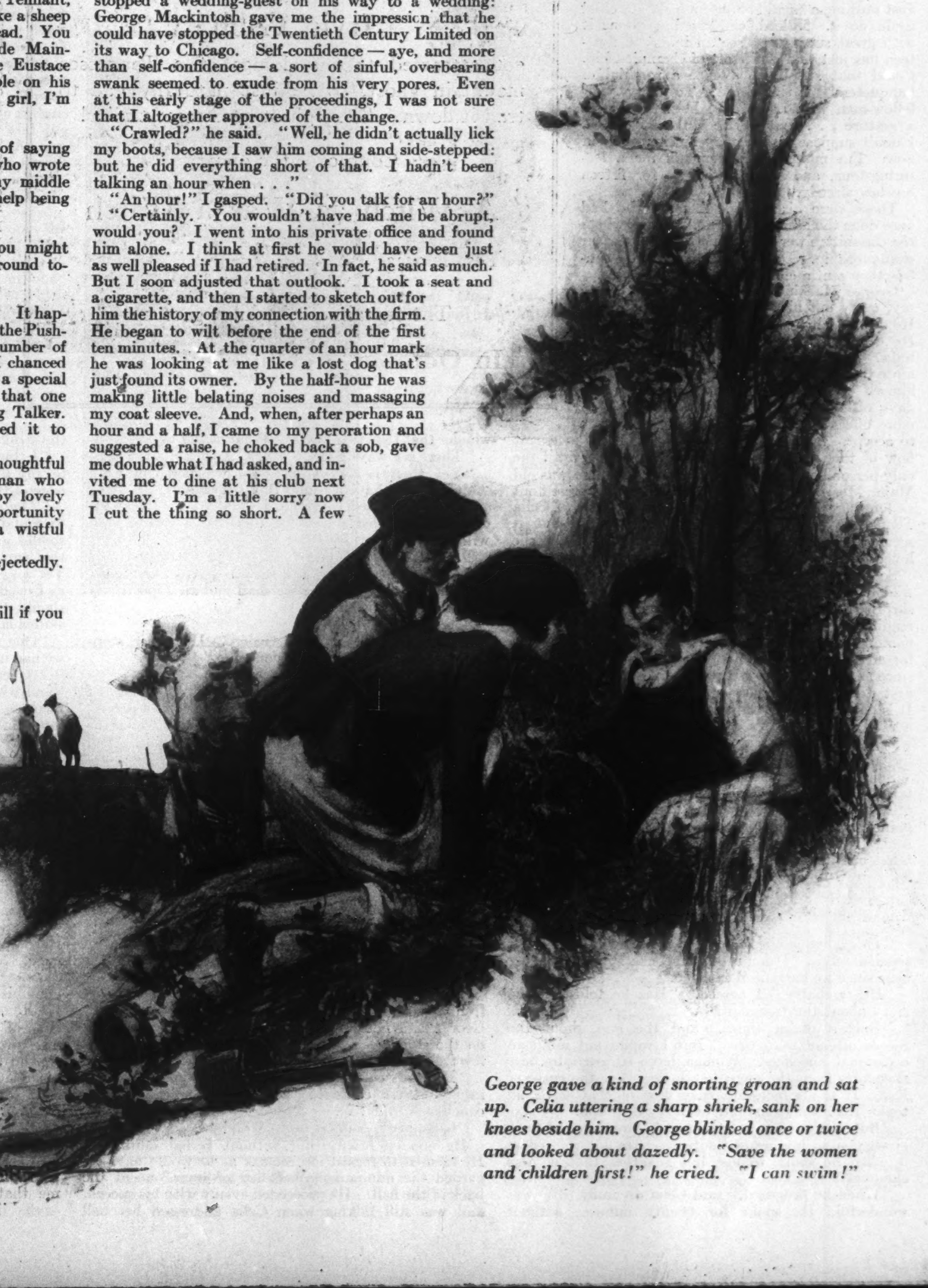
"Oh, that!" said George carelessly. "I've fixed all that."

"What!"

"Oh, yes. On my way up from the station. I looked in on Celia about an hour ago, and it's all settled."

"Amazing!"

"Well, I don't know. I just put the thing to her, and she seemed to see it."



George gave a kind of snorting groan and sat up. Celia uttering a sharp shriek, sank on her knees beside him. George blinked once or twice and looked about dazedly. "Save the women and children first!" he cried. "I can swim!"

"I congratulate you. So now, like Alexander. . . ."

"Alexander who?"

"If you will permit me to finish . . . Like Alexander, you have no more worlds to conquer."

"Well, I don't know so much about that," said George. "The way it looks to me is that I'm just starting. This eloquence is a thing that rather grows on one. You didn't hear about my after-dinner speech at the anniversary banquet of the firm, I suppose? My dear fellow, a riot! A positive stampede. Had 'em laughing and then crying and then laughing again and then crying once more till six of 'em had to be led out and the rest down with hiccoughs. Napkins waving . . . three tables broken . . . waiters in hysterics. I tell you, I played on them as on a stringed instrument. . . ."

"Can you play on a stringed instrument?"

"As it happens, no. But as I would have played on a stringed instrument if I could play on a stringed instrument. Wonderful sense of power it gives you. I mean to go in pretty largely for that sort of thing in future."

"You must not let it interfere with your golf."

He gave a laugh which turned my blood cold.

"Golf!" he said. "After all, what is golf? Just pushing a small ball into a hole. A child could do it. Indeed, children have done it with great success. I see an infant of fourteen has just won some sort of championship. Could that stripling convulse a roomful of banqueters? I think not! To sway your fellow-men with a word, to hold them with a gesture . . . that is the real salt of life. I don't suppose I shall play much more golf now. I'm making arrangements for a lecturing-tour, and I'm booked up for fifteen lunches already."

Those were his words. A man who had once done the lake-hole in one. A man whom the committee were grooming for the amateur championship. I am no weakling, but I confess they sent a chill shiver down my spine.

George Mackintosh did not, I am glad to say, carry out his mad project to the letter. He did not altogether sever himself from golf. He was still to be seen occasionally on the links. But now — and I know of nothing more tragic that can befall a man — he found himself gradually shunned, he who in the days of his sanity had been besieged with more offers of games than he could manage to accept. Men simply would not stand his incessant flow of talk. One by one they dropped off, until the only person he could find to go round with him was old Major Moseby, whose hearing completely petered out as long ago as the year '98. And, of course, Celia Tennant would play with him occasionally: but it seemed to me that even she, greatly as no doubt she loved him, was beginning to crack under the strain.

So surely had I read the pallor of her face and the wild look of dumb agony in her eyes that I was not surprised when, as I sat one morning in my garden reading Ray On Taking Turf, my man announced her name. I had been half expecting her to come to me for advice and consolation, for I had known her ever since she was a child. It was I who had given her her first driver and taught her infant lips to lisp "Fore!" It is not easy to lisp the word "Fore!" but I had taught her to do it, and this constituted a bond between us which had been strengthened rather than weakened by the passage of time.

She sat down on the grass beside my chair, and looked up at my face in silent pain. We had known each other so long that I knew that it was not my face that pained her, but rather some unspoken *malaise* of the soul. I waited for her to speak, and suddenly she burst out impetuously as though she could hold back her sorrow no longer.

"Oh, I can't stand it! I can't stand it!"

"You mean. . . ?" I said, though I knew only too well.

"This horrible obsession of poor George's," she cried passionately. "I don't think he has stopped talking once since we have been engaged."

"He *is* chatty," I agreed. "Has he told you the story about the Irishman?"

"Half a dozen times. And the one about the Swede oftener than that. But I would not mind an occasional anecdote. Women have to learn to bear anecdotes from the men they love. It is the curse of Eve. It is his incessant easy flow of chatter on all topics that is undermining even my devotion."

"But surely, when he proposed to you, he must have given you an inkling of the truth. He only hinted at it when he spoke to me, but I gather that he was eloquent."

"When he proposed," said Celia dreamily, "he was wonderful. He spoke for twenty minutes without stopping. He said I was the essence of his every hope, the tree on which the fruit of his life grew; his Present, his Future, his Past . . . oh, and all that sort of thing. If he would only confine his conversation now to remarks of a similar nature, I could listen to him all day long. But he doesn't. He talks politics and statistics and philosophy and . . . oh, and everything. He makes my head ache."

"And your heart also, I fear," I said gravely.

"I love him!" she replied simply. "In spite of everything, I love him dearly. But what to do? What to do? I have an awful fear that when we are getting married instead of answering 'I will', he will go into the pulpit and deliver an address on Marriage Ceremonies of All Ages. The world to him is a vast lecture-platform. He looks on life as one long after-dinner, with himself as the principal speaker of the evening. It is breaking my heart. I see him shunned by his former friends. Shunned! They run a mile when they see him coming. The mere sound of his voice outside the club-house is enough to send brave men diving for safety beneath the sofas. Can you wonder that I am in despair? What have I to live for?"

Irvin Cobb

got attracted to the doings of a Tennessee mountain ghost, so he just naturally had to trail it down. Some ghost, and some trailer!

Cobb calls the quarry

A Witch as Was a Witch

Yes, it was.

The curtain on the hunt goes up

In October McClure's 15 cents

"There is always golf."

"Yes, there is always golf," she whispered bravely, "Come and have a round this afternoon."

"I had promised to go for a walk. . . ." She shuddered, then pulled herself together. ". . . for a walk with George."

I hesitated for a moment.

"Bring him along," I said, and patted her hand. "It may be that together we shall find an opportunity of reasoning with him."

She shook her head.

"You can't reason with George. He never stops talking long enough to give you time."

"NEVERTHELESS there is no harm in trying. I have an idea that this malady of his is not permanent and incurable. The very violence with which the germ of loquacity has attacked him gives me hope. You must remember that before this seizure he was rather a noticeably silent man. Sometimes I think that it is just Nature's way of restoring the average, and that soon the fever may burn itself out. Or it may be that a sudden shock. . . . At any rate, have courage."

"I will try to be brave."

"Capital! At half-past two on the first tee, then."

"You will have to give me a stroke on the third, ninth, twelfth, fifteenth, sixteenth and eighteenth," she said, with a quaver in her voice. "My golf has fallen off rather lately."

I patted her hand again.

"I understand," I said gently. "I understand."

The steady drone of a baritone voice as I alighted from my car and approached the first tee told me that George had not forgotten the tryst. He was sitting on the stone seat under the chestnut-tree, speaking a few well-chosen words on the Labor Movement.

"To what conclusion, then, do we come?" he was saying. "We come to the foregone and inevitable conclusion that . . ."

"Good afternoon, George," I said.

He nodded briefly, but without verbal salutation. He seemed to regard my remark as he would have regarded the unmannerly heckling of some one at the back of the hall. He proceeded evenly with his speech, and was still talking when Celia addressed her ball and drove off. Her drive, coinciding with a sharp rhetorical question from George, wavered in mid-air, and the ball trickled off into the rough half-way down the hill. I can see the poor girl's tortured face even now. But she breathed no word of reproach. Such is the miracle of woman's love.

"Where you went wrong there," said George, breaking off his remarks on Labor, "was that you have not studied the dynamics of golf sufficiently. You did not pivot properly. You allowed your left heel to point down the course when you were at the top of your swing. This makes for instability and loss of distance. The fundamental law of the dynamics of golf is that the left foot shall be solidly on the ground at the moment of impact. If you allow your heel to point down the course, it is almost impossible to bring it back in time to make the foot a solid fulcrum. . . ."

I drove, and managed to clear the rough and reach the fairway. But it was not one of my best drives. George Mackintosh, I confess, had unnerved me. The feeling he gave me resembled the self-conscious panic which I used to experience in my childhood when informed that there was One Awful Eye that watched my every movement and saw my every act. It was only the fact that poor Celia appeared even more affected by his espionage that enabled me to win the first hole in seven.

On the way to the second tee George discoursed on the beauties of Nature, pointing out at considerable length how exquisitely the silver glitter of the lake harmonized with the vivid emerald turf near the hole and the duller green of the rough beyond it. As Celia teed up her ball, he directed her attention to the golden glory of the sand-pit to the left of the flag. It was not the spirit in which to approach the lake-hole, and I was not surprised when the unfortunate girl's ball fell with a sickening plop half-way across the water.

"Where you went wrong there," said George, "was that you made the stroke a sudden heave instead of a smooth, snappy flick of the wrists. Pressing is always bad, but with the mashie it is fatal. The mashie-shot depends for success almost entirely on the correct movement of the knees. Vardon says that the length of the back-swing should be regulated by the right knee. When the right knee is rigid, then is the time to make the stroke. But you . . ."

"I think I will give you this hole," said Celia to me, for my shot had cleared the water and was lying on the edge of the green. "I wish I hadn't used a new ball."

"The price of golf-balls," said George, as we started to round the lake, "is a matter to which economists should give some attention. I am credibly informed that rubber at the present time is exceptionally cheap. Yet we see no decrease in the price of golf-balls, which, as I need scarcely inform you, are rubber-cored. Why should this be so? You will say that the wages of skilled labor have gone up. True. But . . ."

"One moment, George, while I drive," I said. For we had now arrived at the third tee.

"A curious thing, concentration," said George, "and why certain phenomena should prevent us from focusing our attention. This brings me to the vexing question of sleep. Why is it that we are able to sleep through some vast convulsion of nature, when a dripping tap is enough to keep us awake? I am told that there were people who slumbered peacefully through the San Francisco earthquake, merely stirring drowsily from time to time to tell an imaginary person to leave it on the mat. Yet these same people . . ."

Celia's drive bounded into the deep ravine which yawns some fifty yards from the tee. A low moan escaped her.

"Where you went wrong there—" said George.

"I know," said Celia, "I lifted my head."

I had never heard her speak so abruptly before. Her manner, in a girl less noticeably pretty, might almost have been called snappish. George, however, did not appear to have noticed anything amiss. He filled his pipe and followed her into the ravine.

"Remarkable," he said, "how fundamental a principle of golf is this keeping the head still. You will hear professionals tell their pupils to keep their eye on the ball. Keeping the eye on the ball is only a secondary matter. What they really mean is that the head should be kept rigid, as otherwise it is impossible to . . ."

His voice died away. I had sliced my drive into the woods on the right, and after playing another had gone off to try to find my ball, leaving Celia and George in the ravine behind me. My last glimpse of them showed me that her ball had fallen into a stone-studded cavity in the side of the hill,

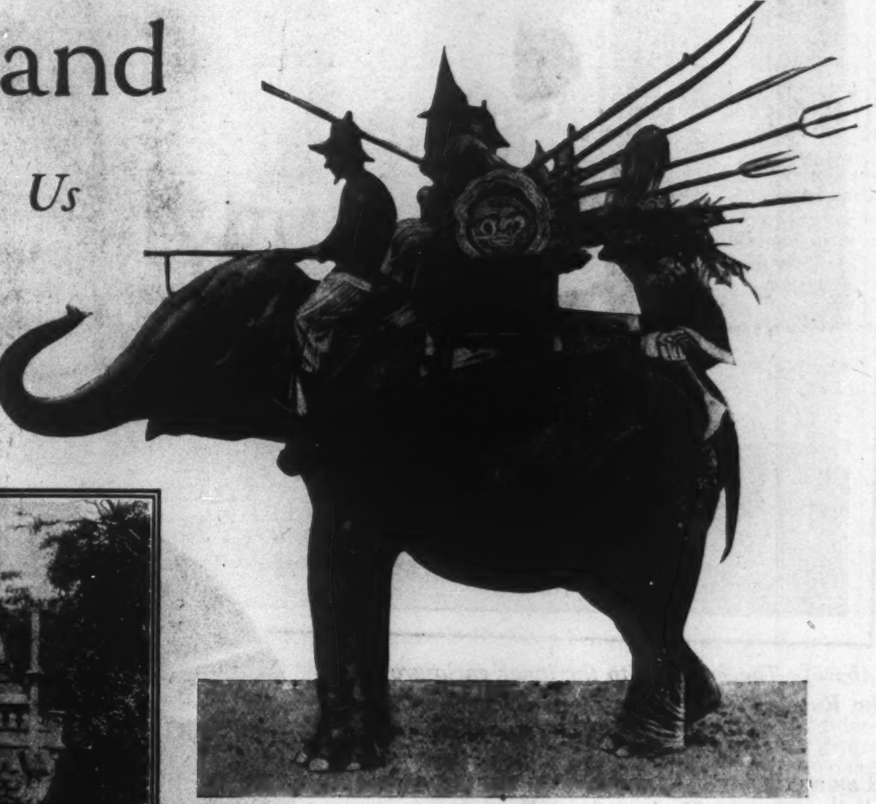
[*Continued on page 40*]

Through *the* Golden Chersonese *to* Elephant Land

One of the Journeys All of Us Would Love to Take

by E. Alexander Powell

SINCE the world began the peacock's tail which we call the Malay Peninsula has swung down from Siam to sweep the Sumatran shore. A peacock's tail not merely in configuration but in its gorgeousness of color. Green jungle — a bewildering tangle of trees, shrubs, bushes, plants and creepers, hung with ferns and mosses, bound together by rattans and trailing vines — clothes the mountains and the lowlands, its verdant riot checked only by the sea. Penetrating the deepest recesses of the jungle a network of little, dusky, winding rivers, green-blue because the sky that is reflected in them is filtered through the interlacing branches. Orchids — death-white, saffron, pink, violet, purple, crimson — festooned from the higher boughs like incandescent lights of colored glass. The gilded, cone-shaped towers of Buddhist temples rising above steep roofs tiled in orange, red or blue, their eaves hung with hundreds of tiny bells which tinkle musically in every breeze. The scarlet splotches of spreading fire-trees against whitewashed walls. Shaven-headed priests in yellow robes offering flowers and food to stolid-faced images of clay and brass. Long files of elephants, bearing men and merchandise beneath the hooded howdahs, rocking and rolling down the dim and deep-worn forest trails. Snowy, hump-backed bullocks, driven by naked brown men, splashing through the shallow water on the rice-fields. Bronze-brown women, their lithe figures wrapped in gaily colored cottons, busying themselves about frail, leaf-thatched dwellings perched high on bamboo piles above the river-banks. And arching over all a sky as flawlessly blue as the vault of the turquoise mosque in Samarkand. Such is the land which the ancients called the Golden Chersonese but which is labeled in the geographies of to-day as Lower Siam and Malaya.



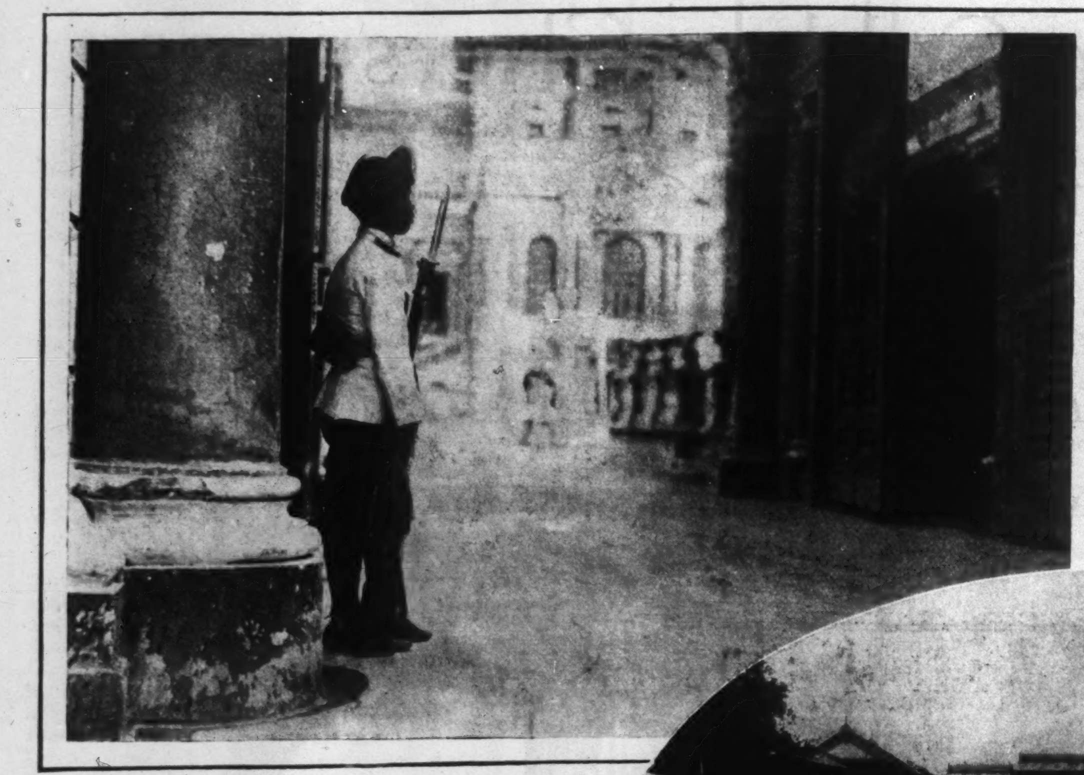
(Above) One of the royal white elephants caparisoned as in the days when the Siamese kings rode them into battle

The Royal Gardens in Siam are thickly dotted with fantastic little shrines

The "Pagoda of Light" which is the most beautiful in Bangkok

Though the existence of this storied region has been known to the western world since Solomon sent the vessels furnished him by Hiram of Tyre "to the land that of old was called Ophir, but now the Aurea Chersonesus, which belongs to India", to fetch gold, it remained for a showman from Bridgeport, Connecticut, to put it on the map so far as Americans were concerned. Until the late Phineas T. Barnum covered the barns and billboards of the United States with gaudy lithographs depicting the sacred white elephant of Siam — which, as a matter of fact, he imported from Moulmein, in Lower Burmah — and the Siamese twins, Chang and Eng — who, though born in Siam, were not Siamese at all but Chinese — the name of the little Asiatic kingdom held no significance for Americans save as a symbol for remoteness. (How many Americans are aware, I wonder, that one of the Siamese kings was named George Washington!) When Siam failed to take advantage of the publicity thus given it by the greatest advertiser of his time, it ignored a golden opportunity for attracting the traveler, the tourist and the trader and through them acquainting the world with its curiosities, its beauties and its resources. But in those days the value of advertising was not as generally recognized as it is now. For example, did you ever hear of any honors being bestowed on the American showman who gave undying fame to Borneo as the home of the wild man? Yet Oriental countries are not always ungrateful for having the limelight of public attention turned upon them, for a former Sultan of Zanzibar once asked me to convey to Mr. John Philip Sousa his appreciation of the fame brought to his island realm by the composer's *A Typical Tune of Zanzibar*.

The gateway to Siam is Singapore, the great commercial seaport which was founded by Sir Stamford Raffles on a little island at the extremity of the Malay Peninsula, and which, like Gibraltar, Suez, Aden and Colombo, is one of the watchdogs set by Britain to guard her trade-routes to the East. From Singapore small steamers sail weekly for Bangkok, a four-day voyage if the monsoon is blowing from the right direction. Or you can cross by ferry to Johore which, some Biblical authorities assert, is identical with the Land of Ophir, and journey thence by the Federated Malay States Railway — it would be advertised as "The Golden Chersonesian Route" were it operated by Americans — as far as Padang Besar, on the northern boundary of the territories under British protection, where the Royal Siamese State Railways begin and where connections can be made for Bangkok. Aside from the heat (the mercury occasionally climbs to 110 in the railway carriages), the insects, the dust, the swarms of sweating natives who pile into every compartment regardless of the class designated on their tickets, the fact that the trains do not run at night and



(Above) The entrance to the inner enclosure of the Royal Palace, which is the official residence of King Rama

A market house built across a canal in Bangkok, the Venice of the East

that the traveler is by no means certain of obtaining satisfactory sleeping accommodations — aside from such minor inconveniences, I repeat, the journey is a delightful one.

That section of the F. M. S. Railway which traverses the Sultanate of Johore runs through the greatest tiger country in all Asia. The tiger is to Johore what the elephant is to Siam and the kangaroo to Australia — a sort of national trademark. Even the postage stamps bear an engraving of the striped monarch of the jungle. There is no place in the world, so far as I am aware, save only a zoo, of course, where one can get a shot at a tiger so quickly and with such a minimum of effort. In this connection I heard a story at the Singapore Club, the truth of which was vouched for by those with whom I was having *tiffin*. Shortly before the war, it seems, an American business man who had amassed a fortune in the export business, and who was noted even in downtown New York as a hustler, was returning from a business trip to China. In the smoke-room of the homeward-bound liner, over the highballs and cigars, he listened to the stories of an Englishman who had been hunting big game in Asia. The conversation eventually turned to tigers.

"Johore's the place for tigers," the Englishman remarked, pouring himself another peg of whiskey. "The beggars are as thick as foxes in Leicestershire. You're jolly well certain of bagging one on your first day out."

"I've always wanted a tiger skin for my smoking-room," commented the American. "Could buy one at a fur shop on the Avenue, of course, but I want one that I shot myself. Think I'll run over to Johore while we're at Singapore and get one."

"But I say, my dear fellow," expostulated the Briton, "you really can't do that, you know. We only stop at Singapore for half a day — get in at daybreak and leave again at noon. You can't get a tiger in that time."

"There's no such word as 'can't' in my business. Business methods will bring results in tiger shooting as quickly as in anything else," retorted the American, rising and heading for the wireless room.

A few hours later the American's representative in Singapore, a youngster who had himself been educated in the school of American business, received a wireless message from the head of his house. It read: "Arriving Singapore daybreak Thursday. Leaving noon same day. Wish to shoot tiger in Johore. Make arrangements."

Now the representative in Singapore knew perfectly well that his promotion, if not his job, depended upon his employer getting a tiger. And, as the steamer was due in four days, there was no time to spare. From the director of the Singapore zoo he purchased, for considerably above the market price, a decrepit and somewhat moth-eaten tiger of advanced years, which he had transported across the straits to Johore, whence it was conveyed by bullock cart to a spot in the edge of the jungle, a dozen miles outside the town, where it was turned loose in an enclosure of wire and bamboo hastily constructed for the purpose.

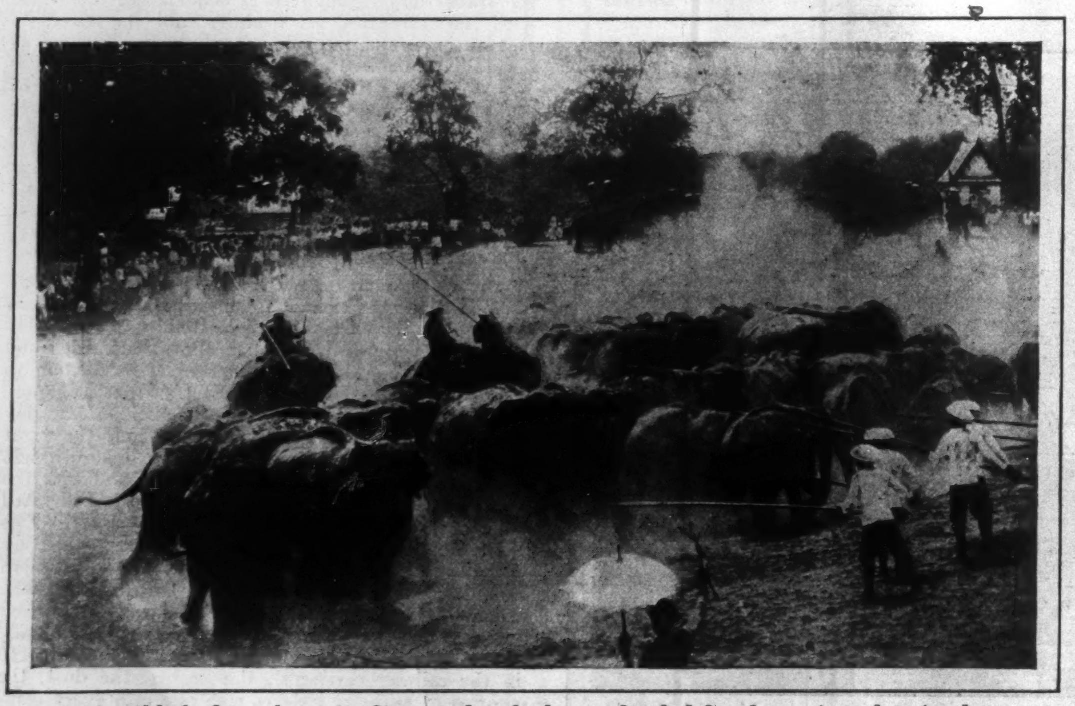
When the steamer bearing the American magnate dropped anchor in the harbor the local representative went aboard with the quarantine officer. Ten minutes later, thanks to arrangements made in advance, a launch was bearing him and his chief to the shore, where a motor-car was waiting. It is barely a dozen miles from the wharf at Singapore to Woodlands, the ferry station opposite Johore, and the driver had orders to shatter the speed laws. A waiting launch streaked across the two miles of channel which separates the island from the mainland and drew up alongside the quay at Johore, where another car was waiting. The roads are excellent in the sultanate, and thirty minutes of fast driving brought the two Americans to the *zareba*, within which the tiger, guarded by natives, was peacefully breakfasting on a goat.

"He's a real man-eater," whispered the agent, handing his employer a loaded express rifle. "We only located him yesterday. Lured him with a goat, you know . . . the smell of blood attracts 'em. You'd better put a bullet in him before he sees us. One just behind the shoulder will do the business."

The magnate, trembling with excitement for the first time in his business life, drew a bead on the tawny stripe behind the tiger's shoulder. There was a shattering roar, the great beast pawed convulsively at the air, then rolled over on its side and lay motionless.

"Good work," the local man commented approvingly. "It's only an hour and forty minutes since we left the boat — a record for tiger shooting, I fancy. We'll be back at Raffles' for breakfast by nine o'clock and after that I'll show you round the city. Don't worry about the skin, sir. The natives'll attend to the skinning and I'll have it on board before you sail."

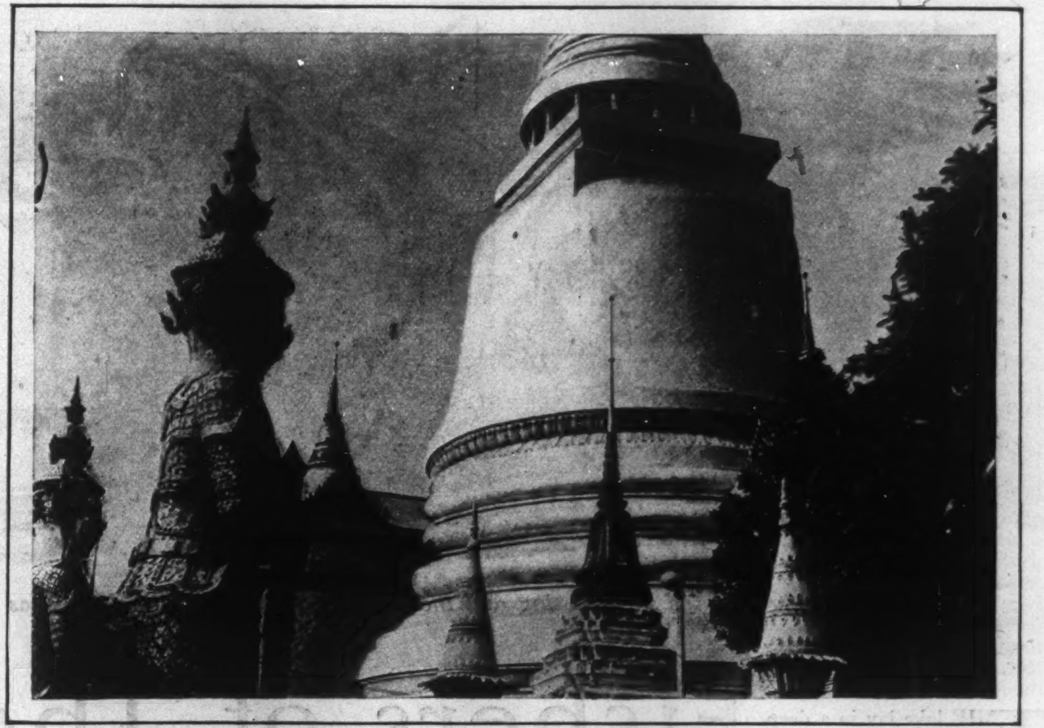
Now — so the story goes — after dinner in the mag-



A wild-elephant hunt in Siam — the elephants, herded by domesticated animals, being driven into the corral nate's New York home he takes his guests into the smoking-room for cigars and coffee. Spread before the fireplace is a great orange-and-black pelt, a trifle faded, it is true, but indubitably the skin of a tiger.

"Yes," the host remarks complacently in reply to his guests' admiring comments, "a real man-eater. Shot him myself in the jungle in Johore. Easy enough to get a tiger if you use American business methods."

When the people whom I met in Borneo and Java and the Straits Settlements learned that I contemplated visiting Siam they attempted to dissuade me. I was warned that the train service up the Peninsula was uncertain, that the steamers up the gulf were uncomfortable, that the hotel in Bangkok was impossible, the dirt incredible, the heat unendurable, the climate unhealthy. And when, desiring to learn whether these indictments were true, I attempted to obtain reliable information about the country to which I was going, I found that none was to be had. The latest volume on Siam which I could find in the Singapore bookshops bore an 1886 imprint. The managers of the two leading hotels in Singapore knew, or professed to know, nothing about hotel accommodation in Bangkok. Though the administration of the Federated Malay States Railway generously offered me the use of a private car over its system, I could obtain no reliable information as to what connections I could make at the Siamese frontier or when I would reach Bangkok. And the only guide-book on Siam which I could discover — quite an excellent little volume, by the way — was published by the Imperial Japanese Railways.



For barbaric splendor the courtyard of the Emerald Buddha Temple has no equal. The huge demon guardians of the Temple are incredibly grotesque

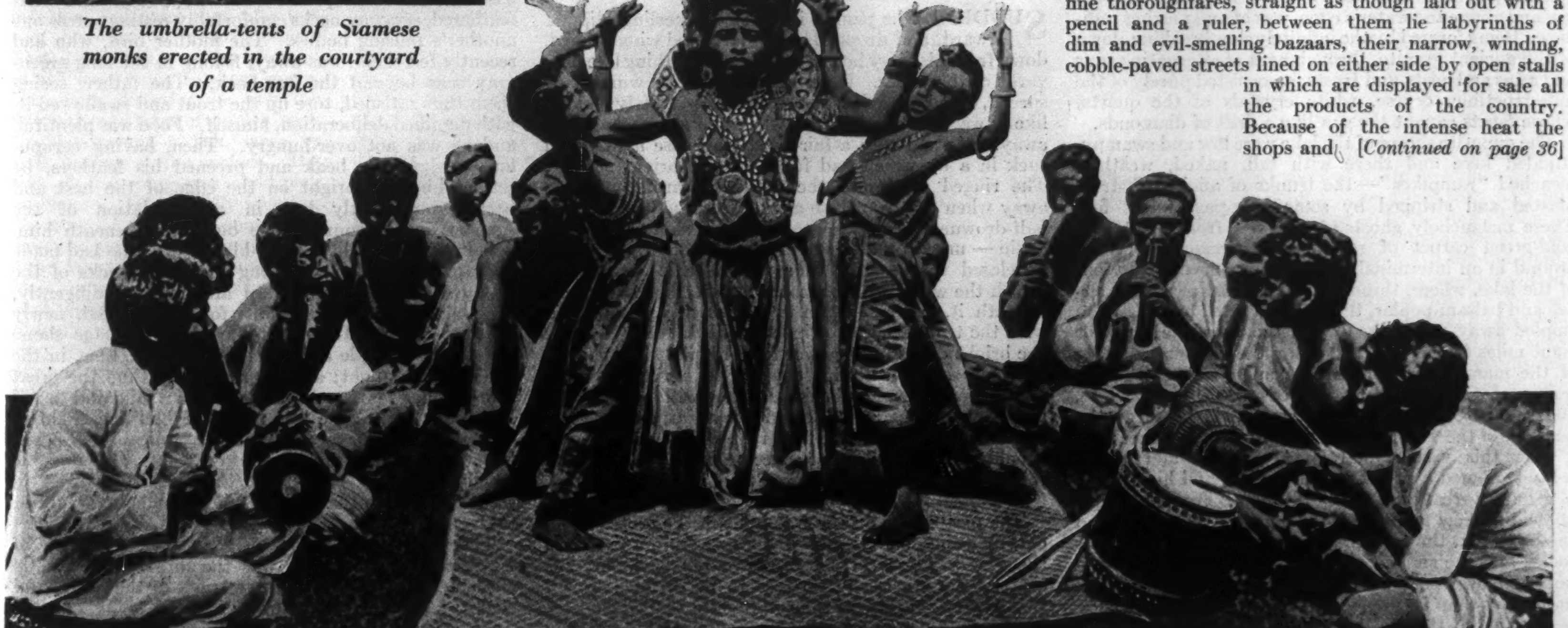
The umbrella-tents of Siamese monks erected in the courtyard of a temple

The Siamese are by no means opposed to foreigners visiting their country, and they would welcome the development of its resources by foreign capital, but owing to the insularity, indifference, timidity and pride which are inherent in the Siamese character, they have taken no steps to bring their country to the attention of the outside world. When one notes the energetic advertising campaigns which are being conducted by the governments of Japan, China, Java, and even Indo-China, where the visitor is confronted at every turn by advertisements entreating him to "Spend the Week-End at Kamakura", "Go to the Great Wall", "Don't Miss Boroboedor and Djokjakarta", "Take Advantage of the Special Fares to the Ruins of Angkor", you wonder why Siam, which has so much that is novel and picturesque to offer, makes no effort to swell its revenues by encouraging the tourist industry. That the royal prince who is the Minister of Communications recently made a tour of the United States for the purpose of studying American railway methods suggests, however, that the Land of the White Elephant is planning to get its share of tourist travel in the future.

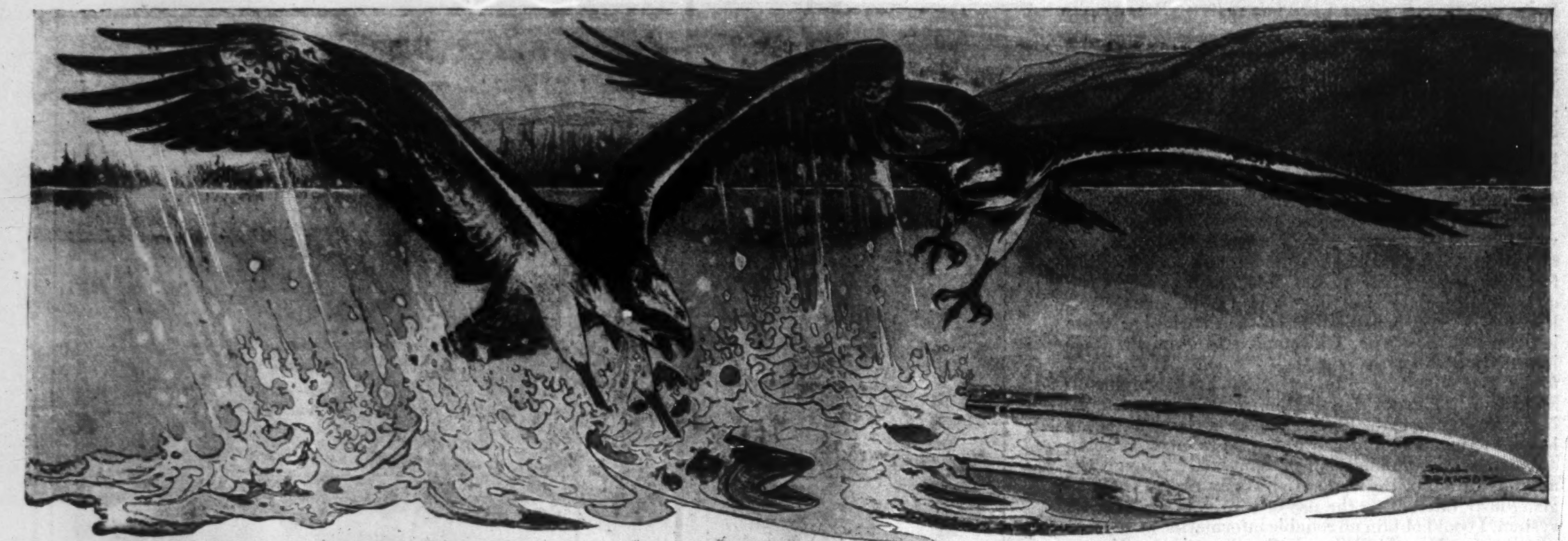
I might as well admit frankly that my first impressions of the Siamese capital were extremely disappointing. I didn't expect to be conveyed to my hotel atop a white elephant, through streets lined with salaaming natives, of course, but neither did I expect to make a wild dash through thoroughfares as crowded with traffic as Fifth Avenue, in a vehicle which unmistakably owed its paternity to Mr. Henry Ford, or to be bruskly halted at busy street crossings by the upraised hand of a helmeted and white-gloved traffic policeman. Nor, upon my arrival at the hotel — there is only one in Bangkok deserving of the name — did I expect to find on the breakfast table a breakfast food manufactured in Battle Creek, or beside my bed an electric fan made in New Britain, Connecticut, or behind the desk a very wide-awake American youth — the son, I learned later, of one of the American advisers to the Siamese Government — who eagerly demanded whether I had brought any American newspapers with me and whether I thought the pennant would be won by the Giants or the White Sox.

Bangkok, which, with its suburbs, has a population about equal to that of Boston, is built on the banks of the country's greatest river, the Menam, some forty miles from its mouth. Though the city has a number of fine thoroughfares, straight as though laid out with a pencil and a ruler, between them lie labyrinths of dim and evil-smelling bazaars, their narrow, winding, cobble-paved streets lined on either side by open stalls in which are displayed for sale all the products of the country. Because of the intense heat the shops and

[*Continued on page 36*]



A group of Siamese actors and musicians. Some of these boys are very young, having been trained for their profession from childhood



The big fish was still resisting and the osprey was beginning to show signs of distress when his mate arrived

Fishers of The Air

A Valiant Pair Taste Deep of Struggle and of Victory

by Major Charles G. D. Roberts

Illustrations by Paul Bransom

THE lake lay in a deep and sun-soaked valley, facing south, sheltered from the sea-winds by a high hog-back of dark green spruce and hemlock forest, broken sharply here and there by out-croppings of white granite.

Beyond the hog-back, some three or four miles away, the green seas creamed and thundered in sleepless turmoil against the towering black cliffs, clamorous with sea-gulls. But over the lake brooded a blue and glittering silence, broken only, at long intervals, by the long-drawn, wistful flute-cry of the Canada white-throat from some solitary tree-top—

Lean — lean — lean-to-me — lean-to-me — lean-to-me — of all bird voices the one most poignant with loneliness and longing.

On the side of the lake nearest to the hog-back the dark green of the forest came down to within forty or fifty paces of the water's edge, and was fringed by a narrow ribbon of very light, tender green — a dense, low growth of Indian willow, elder shrub, and withewood, tangled with white clematis and starred with wild convolvulus. From the sharply defined edge of this gracious tangle a beach of clean sand, dazzlingly white, sloped down to, and slid beneath, the transparent golden lip of the amber-tinted water. The sand, both below and above the water's edge, was of an amazing radiance. Being formed by the infinitely slow breaking-down of the ancient granite, through ages of alternating suns and rains and heats and frosts, it consisted purely of the indestructible, coarse, white crystals of the quartz, whose facets caught the sun like a drift of diamonds.

The opposite shores of the lake were low and swampy, studded here and there with tall, naked, weather-bleached "rampikes"— the trunks of ancient fir-trees blasted and stripped by some long-past forest fire. These melancholy ghosts of trees rose from a riotously gold-green carpet of rank marsh grasses, sweeping around in an interminable, unbroken curve to the foot of the lake, where, through the cool shadows of water-ash and balsam-poplar, the trout-haunted outlet stream rippled away musically to join the sea some seven or eight miles farther on. All along the gold-green sweep of the marsh-grass spread acre upon acre of the flat leaves of the water-lily, starred with broad, white, golden-hearted, exquisitely perfumed blooms, the paradise of the wild bees and honey-loving summer flies.

Over this vast crystal bowl of green and amber solitude domed a sky of cloudless blue; and high in the blue hung a great bird, slowly wheeling. From his height he held in view the intense sparkling of the sea beyond the hog-back, the creaming of the surf about the outer rocks, and the sudden up-springing of the gulls, like a puff of blown petals, as some wave, higher and more impetuous than its predecessors, drove them from their perches. But the aerial watcher had heed only for the lake below him, lying windless and unshadowed in the sun. His piercing eyes, jewel-bright, and with an amazing range of vision, could penetrate to all the varying depths of the lake, and detect the movements of its finny hordes. The great, sluggish lake-trout, or "togue", usually lurking in the obscurest deeps; the shining, active, vermilion-spotted brook-trout, foraging voraciously nearer the shore and the surface; the fat, mud-loving "suckers", rooting the oozy bottom like pigs among the roots of the water-lilies; the silvery chub and the green-and-gold, fiercely spined perch haunting the weedy feeding-grounds down toward the outlet — all these he observed, and differentiated with an expert's eye, attempting to foresee which ones, in their feeding or their play, were likely soonest to approach the surface of their glimmering golden world.

SUDDENLY he paused in his slow wheeling, dipped forward, and dropped, with narrowed wings, down, down from his dizzy height to within something like fifty yards of the water. Here he stopped, with wings wide spread, and hovered, almost motionless, slowly sinking like a waft of thistle-down when the breeze has died away. He had seen a fair-sized trout rise lightly and suck in a fly which had fallen on the bright surface. The ringed ripples of the rise had hardly smoothed away when the trout rose again. As it gulped its tiny half-drowned prey the poised bird shot downward again — urged by a powerful surge of his wings before he closed them — this time with terrific speed. He struck the water with a resounding splash, disappeared beneath it, and rose again two or three yards beyond with the trout securely gripped in his talons. Shaking the bright drops in a shower from his wings he flapped hurriedly away with his capture to his nest on the steep slope of the hog-back. He flew with eager haste, as fast as his broad wings could carry him; for he feared lest his one dreaded foe, the great white-headed eagle, should swoop down out of space on hissing pinions and rob him of his prize.

The nest of the osprey was built in the crotch of an old, lightning-blasted pine which rose from a fissure in the granite about fifty feet above the lake. As the osprey had practically no foes to be dreaded except that tyrannical robber, the great white-headed eagle — which, indeed, only cared to rob him of his fish and never dared drive him to extremities by appearing to threaten his precious nestlings — the nest was built without any pretense of concealment, or, indeed, any attempt at inaccessibility, save such as was afforded by the high, smooth, naked trunk which supported it. An immense, gray, weatherbeaten structure, conspicuous for miles, it looked like a loose cartload of rubbish, but in reality the sticks and dried rushes and mud and strips of shredded bark of which it was built were so solidly and cunningly interwoven as to withstand the wildest of winter gales. It was his permanent summer home, to which he and his handsome, daring mate were wont to return each spring from their winter sojourn in the sun-lands of the south. A little tidying-up, a little patching with sticks and mud, a relining with feathers and soft, winter-withered grasses. and the old nest was quickly ready to receive the eggs of his mate — beautiful and precious eggs, two, three or four, in number, and usually of the rich color of old ivory very thickly splashed with a warm purplish brown.

This summer there were four nestlings in the great, untidy nest; and they kept both their devoted parents busy, catching, and tearing up into convenient morsels, fish enough to satisfy their vigorous appetites. At the moment when the father osprey returned from the lake with the trout which he had just caught they were full fed and fast asleep, their downy heads and half-feathered, scrawny necks comfortably resting across one another's pulsing bodies. The mother bird, who had recently fed them, was away, fishing in the long green-gray seas beyond the hog-back. The father, seeing them thus satisfied, tore up the trout and swallowed it, with dignified deliberation, himself. Food was plentiful, and he was not over-hungry. Then, having scrupulously wiped his beak and preened his feathers, he settled himself upright on the edge of the nest and became apparently lost in contemplation of the spacious and tranquil scene outspread beneath him. A pair of bustling little crow-blackbirds, who had made their own small home among the outer sticks of the gigantic nest, flew backward and forward diligently, bringing insects in their bills for their naked, newly hatched brood. Their metallic black plumage shone iridescently, purple and green and radiant blue, in the unclouded sunlight; and from time to time the great osprey rolled his eyes upon them with a mild and casual interest. Neither he nor his mate had the slightest objection to their presence, being amicably disposed toward all living creatures except fish and possible assailants of the nest. And the blackbirds dwelt in security under that powerful, though involuntary, protection.

The osprey, the great fish-hawk or fish-eagle of Eastern North America, was the most attractive, in character, of all the predatory tribes of the hawks and eagles. Of dauntless courage without being quarrelsome or tyrannical, he strictly minded his own business, which was that of catching fish; and none of the wild folk of the forest, whether furred or feathered, had cause to fear him so long as they threatened no peril to his home or young. On account of this well-known good reputation, he was highly respected by the hunters and lumbermen and scattered settlers of the backwoods, and it was held a gross breach of the etiquette of the wilderness to molest him or disturb his nest. Even the fish he took — and he was a most tireless and successful fisherman — were not greatly grudged to him; for his chief depredations were upon the coarse-fleshed and always superabundant chub and suckers, which no human fisherman would take the trouble to catch.

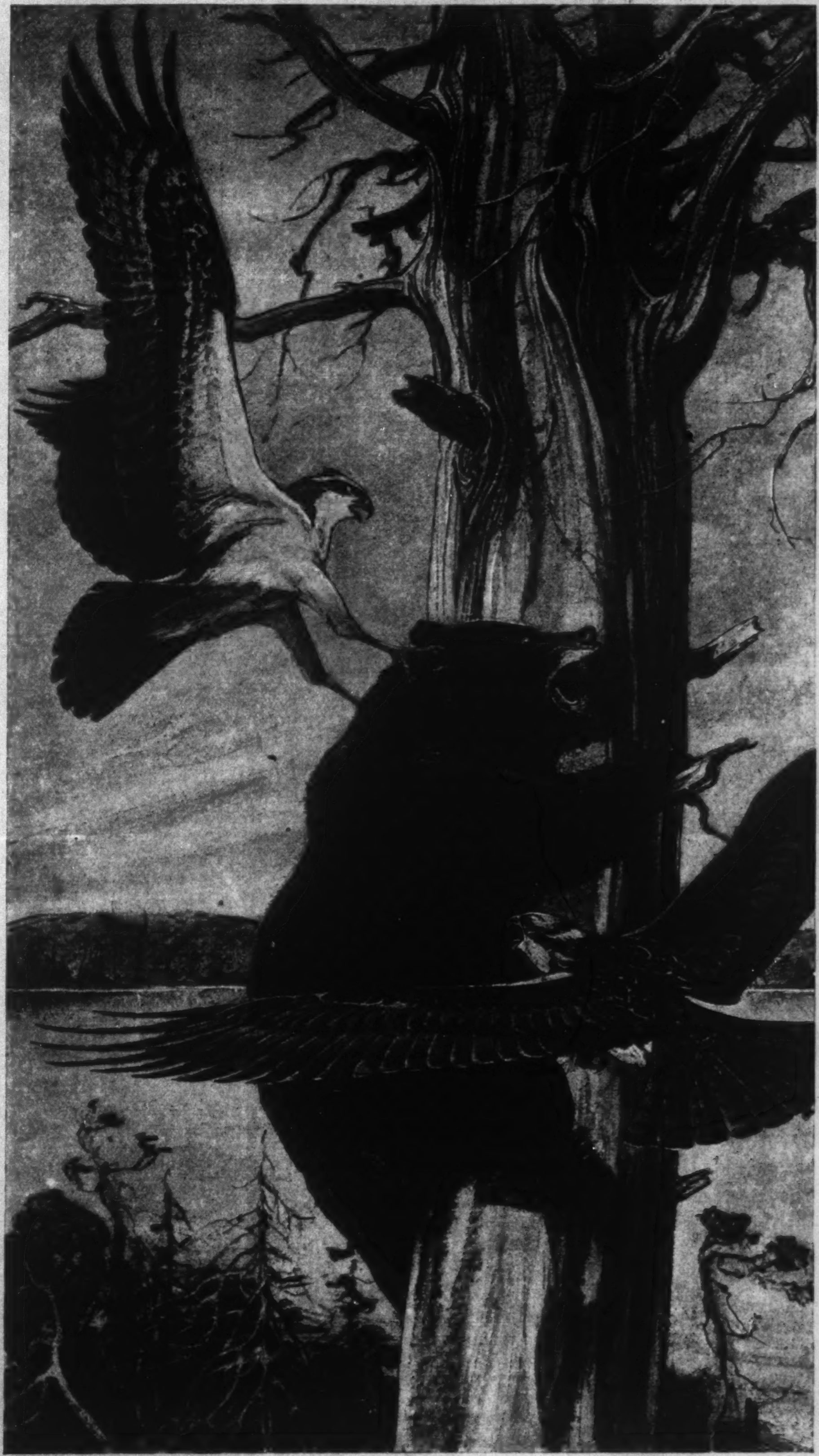
With all this good character to his credit, he was at the same time one of the handsomest of the great hawks. About two feet in length, he was of sturdy build, with immensely powerful wings whose tips reached to the end of his tail. All his upper parts were of a soft dark brown, laced delicately and sparsely with white; and the crown of his broad-skulled, intelligent head was heavily splashed with white. All his under parts were pure white except the tail, which was crossed with five or six even bars of pale umber. His long and masterful beak, curved like a sickle and nearly as sharp, was black; while his formidable talons, able to pierce to the vitals of their prey at the first clutch, were of a clean gray-blue. His eyes, large and full-orbed, with a beautiful ruby-tinted iris encircling the intense black pupil, were gemlike in their brilliance but lacked the implacable ferocity of the eyes of the eagle and the goshawk.

PRESENTLY, flying low over the crest of the hog-back with a gleaming mackerel in her talons, appeared his mate. Arriving swiftly at the nest, and finding the nestlings still asleep, she deposited the mackerel in a niche among the sticks, where it lay flashing back the sun from its blue-barred sides, and set herself to preening her feathers still wet from her briny plunge. The male osprey, after a glance at the prize, seemed to think it was up to him to go her one better. With a high-pitched, musical, staccato cry of *Pip-pip — pip — pip* — very small and childish to come from so formidable a beak — he launched himself majestically from the edge of the nest, and sailed off over the hot green tops of the spruce and fir to the lake.

Instead of soaring to his "watch-tower in the blue" he flew now quite low, not more than fifty feet or so above the water; for a swarm of small flies was over the lake and the fish were rising to them freely.

In every direction he saw the little widening rings of ripples, each of which meant a fish, large or small, feeding at the surface. His wide, all-discerning eyes could pick and choose. Whimsically ignoring a number of tempting quarry, he winnowed slowly to the farther side of the lake; and then, pausing to hover just above the line where the water-lilies ended, he dropped suddenly, struck the water with a heavy splash, half submerging himself, and rose at once, his wings beating the spray, with a big silver chub in his claws. He had his prey gripped near the tail, so that it hung, twisting and writhing with inconvenient violence, head downward. At about twenty-five or thirty feet above the water he let it go, and swooping after it caught it again dexterously in midair, close to the head, as he wanted it. In this position the inexorable clutch of his needle-tipped talons pierced the life out of it, and its troublesome squirming ceased.

Flying slowly with his solid burden, he had just about reached the center of the lake, when an ominous hissing in the air above him warned him that his mighty foe, from far up in the blue dome, had marked his capture and was swooping down upon him to rob him of the prize. He swerved sharply; and in the next second the eagle, a wide-winged, silvery-headed bird of twice his size, shot downward past him with a strident scream and a rustle of stiff-set plumes, swept under him in a splendid curve, and came back at him with wide-open beak and huge talons outspread. He was too heavily laden either to fight or dodge, so he discreetly dropped the fish. With a lightning swoop his tormentor caught it before it could reach the water, and flew off with it to his eyrie in a high, inaccessible ravine at the farthest end of the hog-back, several miles down the outlet stream. The osprey, taking quite philosophically a discomfiture which he had suffered so many times before, stared after the magnificent pirate angrily for a few seconds, then circled away to seek another quarry. He knew that he would be left in peace to enjoy what he might take.



With sharp cries of rage and despair the ospreys, realizing their appalling peril, swooped downward and dashed madly upon their monstrous foe

But this time, in his exasperated anxiety to more than make good his loss, his ambition somewhat overreached itself. To borrow the pithy phrase of the backwoodsman, he "bit off more than he could chew."

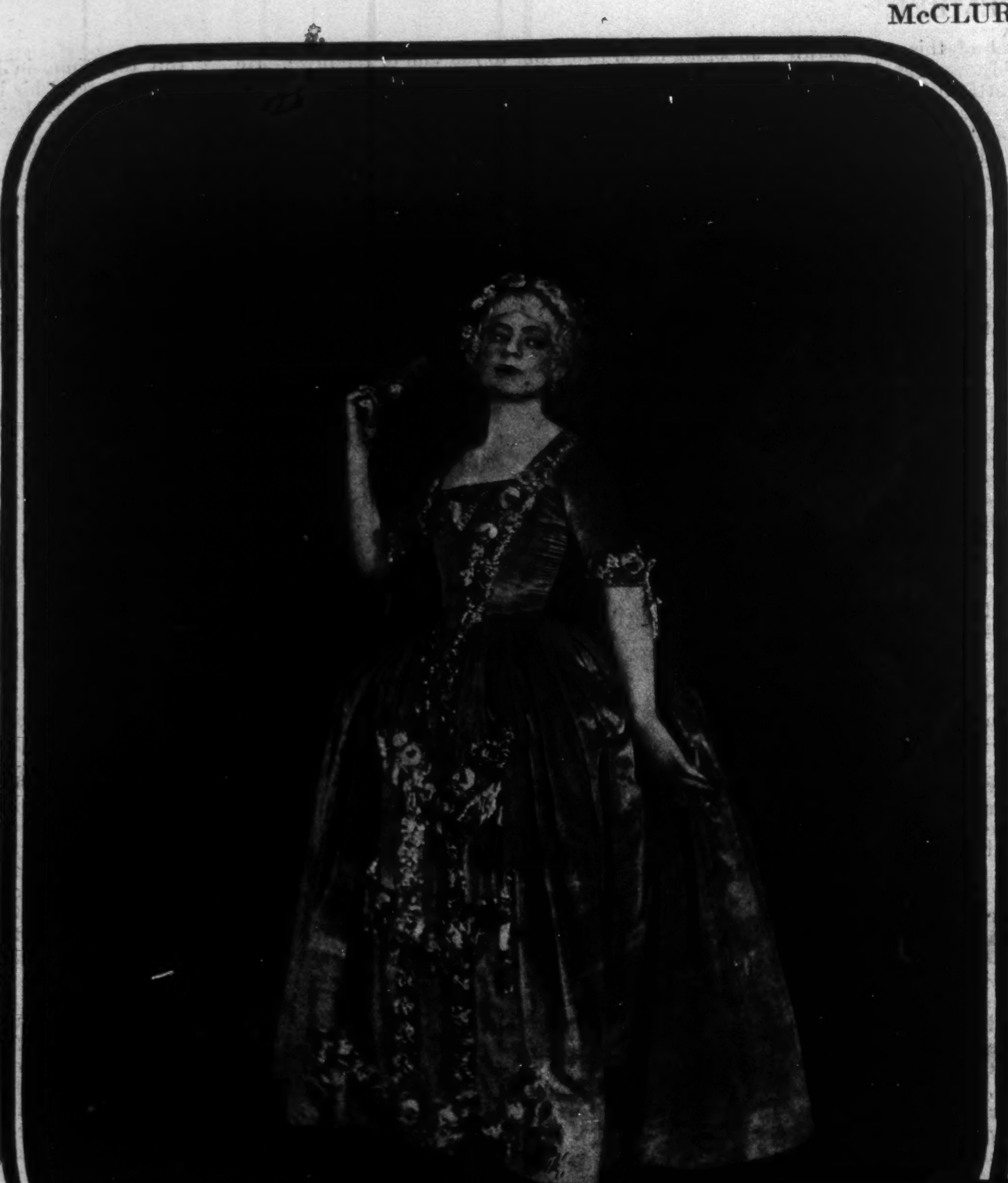
One of these big gray lake-trout, or "togue", which as a rule lurk obstinately in the utmost depths, rose slowly to investigate the floating body of a dead swallow. Pausing a few inches below the surface, he considered as to whether he should gulp down the morsel or not. Deciding, through some fishy caprice, to leave it alone (possibly he had once been hooked, and broken himself free with a painful gullet!), he was just turning away to sink lazily back into the depths, when something like a thunderbolt crashed down upon the water just above him and fiery pincers of horn fixed themselves deep into his massive back.

With a convulsive surge of his broad-fluked, muscular tail he tried to dive, and for a second drew his assailant clean under. But in the next moment the osprey, with a mighty beating of wings which threshed the water into foam, forced him to the surface, and lifted him clear. But he was too heavy for his captor, and almost immediately he found himself partly back in his own element, sufficiently submerged to make mighty play with his lashing tail. For all his frantic struggles, however, he could not again get clear under, so as to make full use of his strength; and neither could his adversary, for all his tremendous flapping, succeed in holding him in the air for more than a second or two at a time.

And so the furious struggle, half upon and half above the surface, went on between these two so evenly matched opponents, while the tormented water boiled and foamed, and showers of bright spray leaped into the air. But the osprey was fighting with brains as well as with wings and talons. He was slowly but surely urging his adversary over toward that white beach below the hog-back, where, in the shallows, he would have him at his mercy and be able to end the duel with a stroke or two of his rending beak. If his strength could hold out till he gained the beach he would be sure of victory. But the strain, as unusual as it was tremendous, was already beginning to tell upon him, and he was yet some way from shore.

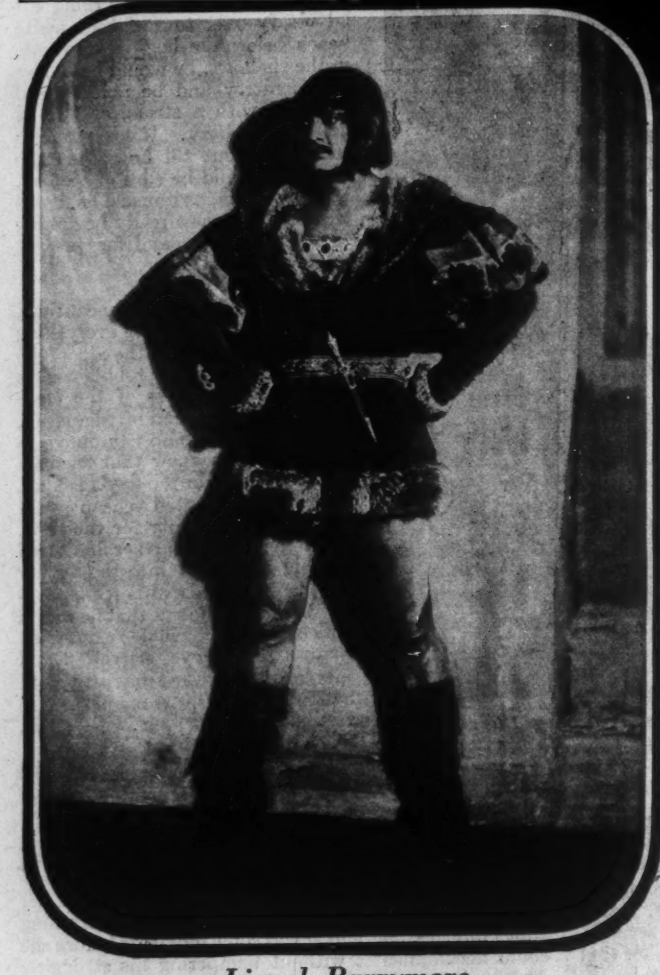
HIS MATE, in the meantime, had been watching everything from her high perch on the edge of the nest. At sight of the robber eagle's attack and his theft of the chub her crest feathers had lifted angrily, but she had made no vain move to interfere. She knew that such an episode was all in the day's fishing, and might be counted a cheap way of purchasing immunity for the time. When her gallant partner first lifted the big lake-trout into the air her bright eyes flamed with fierce approval. But when she saw that he was in difficulties her whole expression changed. Her eyes narrowed and she leaned forward intently with half-raised wings. A moment more and she was darting with swift, short wing-beats to his help.

By the time she arrived the desperate combatants were nearing the shore, though the big fish was still resisting with undiminished vigor, while his captor, though undaunted, was beginning to show signs of distress. With excited cries of *Pip-pip, pip-pip*, she hovered close above her mate, seeking to strike her eager talons into his opponent's head. But his threshing wings impeded her and it was some moments before she could accomplish it without hampering his struggles. At last she saw her opportunity, [*Continued on page 51*]

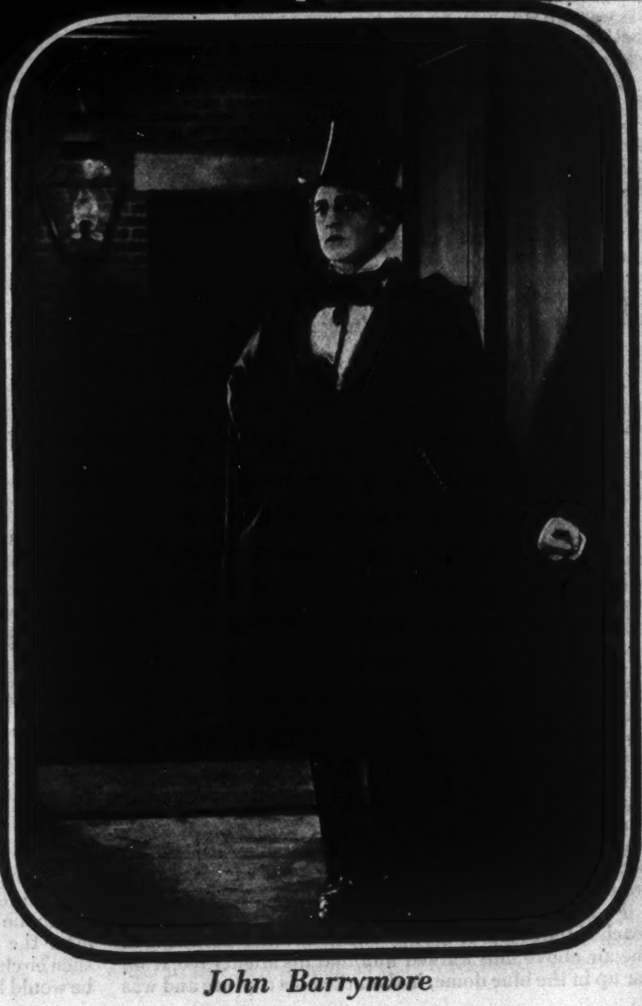


Ethel Barrymore

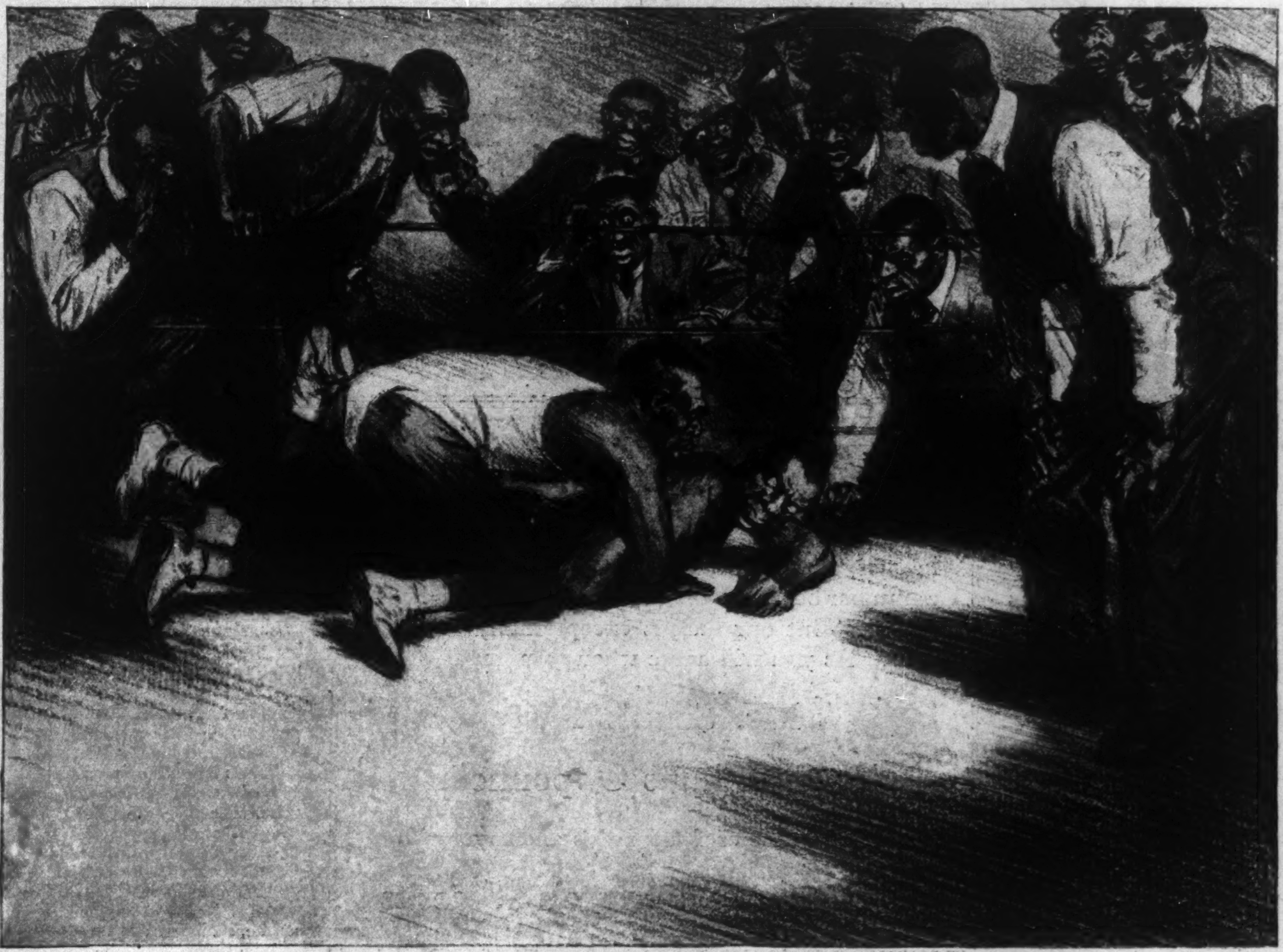
The Royal Family of the American Stage



Lionel Barrymore



John Barrymore



A leap and Ethelbe't had seized Mo's sorest foot and begun the twisting torment of a toe-hold. Mo's eyes rolled. A second he stood the pain, then bawled: "Leggo mah foot!"

To Oblige a Lady

A Story in Which You Can Imagine Bert Williams Playing the Leading Part

by Courtney Ryley Cooper

Illustrations by J. J. Gould

MO' CALICOTTE stood, or rather, shifted, on the southwest corner of the crawdad center of Kansas City, his eyes rolling uncertainly, his big feet, with their razor-slits at the bunion points, rising alternately and painfully to free them from contact with the still hot pavement remaining from a broiling Missouri Valley summer day. It was sort of an instinctive thing, this foot-raising, for as much attention as Mo' possessed was focused across the street.

Two hours before, Mo' had shambled painfully down the gang-plank of the good ship *Chester* at First and Walnut Streets, with exactly one object in view. But the object was possible of accomplishment only in the daytime — and it already was twilight when he arrived. That had meant a night to wait and Mo' had wandered to the only place he knew where a friend might be found. Hence his presence at Ninth and Wyandotte Streets, with distress on his mind and something else on his conscience. Vaguely he felt that business in the crawdad world was suffering on his account.

It all had come about through his meeting with Beelgie Lannin'ham, his one and only friend, who owned the crawdad concession on the southwest corner and who once had lived in Lexington, whence came Mo' and his consignment of feet. Before the meeting, Beelgie had entertained nothing save the idea of selling as many dozen as possible of the red-shelled crustaceans in his basket and then catching the twelve o'clock car for his little shack on Vine Street. But Mo's entrance had changed matters. To say nothing of reviving the knowledge that the Eighteenth Street Social and Athletic Club intended putting on a battle royal long about 9 o'clock, with refreshments. Therefore, exit Beelgie, leaving the giant, shambling, grinning, simple-minded personage of Mo' Calicotte to mind the crawdads and collect the quarters. And Mo' wasn't up on crawdads, at least from a standpoint of salesmanship.

The learned persons who write the encyclopedias will tell you that a crawdad is a crayfish, and that a crayfish is "the name of a fresh water crustacean closely allied to and resembling the lobster and, like it, belonging to the order Macrura." Which is, as most learned things are, entirely beside the point. A crawdad is something that is caught with a hunk of liver and a piece of string from the mud-bottomed streams of the middle west, boiled until it turns red in a conglomeration of potatoes, chives, bay leaves and what not, and sold from a chip-basket on the street-corners on summer nights, for twenty-five cents a dozen. This Mo' knew — but the real thing was that he didn't know how to sell them. He needed practise, and selling points, and above all, a rush of trade. The sooner he disposed of that basket of crawdads, the sooner he could seek a spot in a doorway and rest his feet. Moreover, he had competition.

Across the way was a second vender of the Indian Creek delicacy, and to judge from the amount of trade, he apparently knew how to vend.

For more than an hour, Mo' had listened and watched, silent for the most part in admiration and awe. There was a sort of *éclat* about his rival, in appearance and in delivery, that Mo' could not hope to meet — and so he simply had remained squelched, dividing his attention between the misery in his feet and the crawdads in Beelgie's basket. But now all was changed. Mo' was in the terrible throes of an idea.

As far as active competition was concerned, Mo' knew that his rival had everything. In the first place, he was short and trim and chipper. He wore a checked suit and a red tie, to say nothing of a derby bought first-hand, from all appearances. His bright, yellow shoes had appropriate cloth tops and his waving right hand, when he scooped up a dozen crawdads, wrapped them in newspaper and delivered them to a customer, showed the flash of a diamond. To Mo', he was out and out high-toned city folks while Mo'— well, had it not been for those feet, he still would have been jerking two hundred pound cakes of ice out upon the dock of the little plant in Lexington. Therefore, there was only one thing to do. He couldn't beat the opposition. But he could join him, and as a new outburst came from the opposite corner, Mo' listened with the deference that only brawn and a genial, self-effacing disposition can accord the brightness of brains and genius.

"Crawpappies!" the rival was calling. "Nice, big juicy, craw-w-w-pappies! Fresh 'n' hot! Double-jinted, milk-fed, han'-raised, Innian Crick crawpappies! Nice 'n' hot! N-i-i-i-c-e 'n' hot!"

Mo' Calicotte grinned and shuffled. He swung his loose-jointed arms and then relieved the pressure on his right foot by holding it up, something after the fashion of a horse about to be shod. He rolled his eyes and called:

"Same on dis side!"

The small, chipper rival gave him a glance of scorn and rose to newer heights as three prospective customers approached:

"Nice 'n' hot! Crawpappies! Fine 'n' fresh, melt in yo' mouth. Heah you is, get 'em while they's hot — crawpappies — craw-w-w-pappies!"

"Same on dis side!" called Mo' in his high-pitched, half-whiney voice. The rival cocked his derby and gave him another look. Then back to his trade:

"Innian Crick crawpappies! Biled in butteh! Tendeh as chicken, sweet as pigtail. Git 'em while they's hot. Big, fat, juicy, craw-w-w-w-pappies!"

"Same on dis side!"

A customer laughed, swerved from a possible purchase at the rival's basket, and crossed to Mo' Calicotte. More, he purchased to the extent of fifty cents. It was too much for the chipper vendor across the way, especially as the long blocks, now devoid of pedestrians, denoted a coming slump in trade. A tilt to the derby, a straightening of the red tie and he came jauntily over to his competitor. But if there was anger in his soul, it was well concealed.

"DIS YERE ain't Beelgie!" he announced with a show of surprise. "Ah thought — —"

"No, suh." Mo' grinned and shuffled about on his sore feet. "No suh. Beelgie done tuk de night off."

"Hones' so?" There was deep interest in the tone. "Liken you is a frien' o' his?"

"Um-humph."

"Callate to hol' this yere job long?"

Mo' swung his arms and shook his head.

"Not oveh long, Ah reckon. Ah's jis' volyunteehin' till Beelgie gits back from de battle royal. Dis yere ain't no reg'leh job wif me. Ah come frum down in Lexumton."

"Lexumton? Humph!" The brown man rocked thoughtfully on heel and toe. "Liken you is come up to Kan City onto business?"

Mo' scratched his head.

"Ah doan know iffen it's business or ain't it," he admitted. "Ah's done come up heah to git me a chirpodis'."

"To git you a which?"

"Da's wha' dey tole me at de ice-house, to come up to Kan City an' git me a chirpodis'. What I liken to know: wheh at *is* a chirpodis'?"

"You is hit de question," agreed the smaller man. "Wheh *is* de chirpodis'?" Then adopting another method at illumination: "S'pose you gits hold o' this yere chirpodis'. What you callate t' do wif it?"

"Do wif it?" Mo' stared. "Ah's gwine git mah foots fixed."

"U-cose. U-cose. Is they out o' kilteh?"

"Powehful," admitted Mo'. "Neveh had the misery wusser'n Ah got it now. It's from standin' in de wet all day long, day in an' day out, all de time in de wet. So Ah jis' saved up mah money — —"

"Um-humph! You save it up. It's de only way a pusson gits anywheh these days — save it up." There was a strange glint in his eyes. "'Scuse me jis' a minute, brotheh. Seems liken to me they's a customeh waitin'."

He hurried across the street with a fluster of business to wait upon a lone newsboy, then to resume the advertising of his wares. Nor did he seem to object when, after his perorations, there came the steady repetition of Mo' Calicotte's:

"Same on dis side. Yas suh, same on dis side!"

In fact, Mo' beamed and glowed in the thought of his acquaintanceship, and apparent friendliness. An hour passed. The chipper competitor did not return to chat again — but Beelgie did. At last Mo' was free, and forcing his aching feet forward, he turned vaguely in the direction of Third and Broadway, where Beelgie had told him he might find a room. A half-block down Wyandotte Street, in the darkness of the high buiidings, he turned again, at the patter of hurried steps and the sound of a familiar voice.

"Is you goin' mah way or is you jis' walkin'?"

"Ah reckon Ah is," answered Mo' somewhat dazedly. The friendship of a highfalutin' personage like his erstwhile competitor was a bit too much for him. "You livin' dis yere way?"

"No." In the darkness the smaller man brushed an imaginary bit of lint from a sleeve of his checked coat. "Jis' a social call. But Ah is tol'ble wide quainted. Is you lookin' fo' sompin' 'ticular?"

"Jis' a place whereat Ah kin took offen dese shoes. Dey's all full o' foots. Ah neveh had de misery so bad in all mah life!"

They walked on then for a block or two, the brown man apparently deep in thought. Then suddenly:

"What was you sayin' yo' name was?"

Mo' told him. The brown man nodded, in spite of the fact that it was the first time he had heard it.

"'At's what Ah thoughten you say. Ah jis' reckoned Ah'd ask agin."

"Um-humph," answered Mo', "Seems t' me Ah done miss yo' name. What was you sayin' it t' be laik?"

"Carteh. Ha'ison Carteh."

"Um-humph. Da's wha' Ah fo't it was."

Another block went by in silence. At last, Mr. Harrison turned with a sudden air of directness.

"How much you save up fo' this yere chirpodis'?"

"Who? Me?" Mo' blinked in thought. "Ah done save up seven dolleh."

"Seven dolleh? You got seven dolleh?" The brown man stopped short and Mo' stopped with him. "Lemme see it."

"Oh, Ah got it."

We try to have

A Detective Story

in every number. Sometimes we have to miss a number because the real detective story is hard to get. But our luck is exceptionally good at that. As you will agree when you read

Mr. Senn's Past

by E. Phillips Oppenheim

master of the craft of thrills and mysteries

In October McClure's 15 cents

"Mebbe you got it, and mebbe you ain't. Lemme see 'at seven dolleh."

"Whaffo' you wan' t' see it?"

"Well," and there was a fine tinge of scorn in the voice. "Anybody — anybody can *say* he got seven dolleh. But has you *got* it?"

"'Cose Ah got it!"

"Well, show me. Show me, Black Boy!" There was a bruskness of command in the voice that overwhelmed Mo' Calicotte. As though fulfilling a solemn duty, he pulled a soiled handkerchief from his pocket and untied the knot. There lay seven silver coins. The brown, chipper Mr. Harrison Carter put forth a hand.

"Gimme that money — an' c'mon!"

"Who? Me?"

"Yeh. You. C'mon, Black Boy. Ah ain't stealin' yo' money. Gimme it."

"Whaffo'?" Mo' suddenly was blinking with uncertainty and excitement. Seven dollars to him meant many cakes of ice, each weighing two hundred pounds, each waiting to be yanked fifty feet and loaded into a wagon. "Whaffo' Ah gib you dis seven dolleh? You ain't no chirpodis'."

"Mebbe Ah is an 'mebbe Ah isn't. Boy, ef you wants to be happy, gimme that seven dolleh!" And then he took it, Mo' staring vaguely at him as he did so, holding the handkerchief, and rubbing the place where the coins had been. The brown stranger became suddenly energetic. "C'mon, Boy!"

"Wheh at is we — —"

"Wheh is we gwine?" Mr. Carter increased his speed. "We's gwine to build a brick house wif this seven dolleh. 'At's wheh we's gwine."

"Ah doan want no brick house." A slight wail had come into Mo' Calicotte's voice. "Ah wants mah foots fixed."

"Does you wants your foots fixed jis' mejium, or does you want 'em done scrumptious?"

"Huh?"

"Ah says, does you wants jis' a common, o'd'na'y job, or does you — —"

"Ah'd liken it first class. Da's me — —"

"Then c'mon."

"How fa' 'tis it?"

"'Bout fo' blocks."

Mo' shook his head.

"Ah cain't hu[illegible] fas'. Mah foots won' hol' out."

"Then come as fas' 's you kin. We's gwine build a brick house."

"Wha' wif?"

"Ain't this yere seven dolleh? An' ain't seven Ole Man Luck hisse'f? C'mon, Boy!"

He led the way excitedly, Mo' shuffling along as best he could in the wake, his eyes glued on the form before him, not so much because it was a form, but because it possessed his seven dollars. Out of the dark manufacturing district they passed and into the brightness of Fifth and Broadway. Then sauntering down an alley went the brown, chipper Mr. Carter, to turn at last into a long, dark areaway, thence through a door. A group of negroes, gathered about a blanket, looked up excitedly, and went back to their game. The commanding Mr. Carter turned to his companion.

"Ooze up, Boy," he ordered, "ooze up wheh you kin touch me. Keep yo' han' on mah shouldeh."

Then turning to the crowd:

"Who's tired o' them bones? Ah's frettin' wif luck money!"

"Take 'em." Wearily a long, yellow participant of the blanket encounter crawled from his place, and the chipper person took it, Mo' beside him. Suddenly, however, the eyes of the footsore Calicotte goggled. His new companion had tossed the entire fortune upon the blanket and without waste of time or words was rolling the dice between his palms preparatory to "Coming out." Mo' leaned close — quickly.

"Lissen," he begged. "Hadn' we betteh pinch offen a bit?"

"Whaffo? Lemme be. We's gwine build a brick house."

"Ah says da's right." Mo' grinned at the shining faces about him. "Da's what we's gwine do — buil' a brick house."

"Who fades me? Who fades me?"

"Da's it. Who fades us? Who — —"

Dollars had dropped to the blanket. Out rolled the dice and Mo' stared blankly, his tongue hanging over his teeth. A five and a two lay face upward on the blanket. Mr. Carter reached very delicately for the dice.

"Fade de fo'teen!"

"Hu?" Mo' moistened his lips. "Lissen at me, hadn' we betteh — —"

"Ah shoots de fo'teen!"

There was no use of further argument. Mo' grinned.

"Da's what we does," he announced. "We shoots de fo'teen."

"Did anybody heah me say Ah shoot de — —"

The money came forth. Also the dice. A gasp went around the blanket. Eight pairs of eyes had centered upon a six and a five. Calmly Mr. Carter scooped it all into a pile and gazed at the ceiling, rattling the dice as he waited.

"Ah shoots de twenty-eight!"

"Lissen — f' Gawd's sake, lissen! Le's pinch offen a bit."

"Sho, Boy, didn't Ah tole you Ah'd build you a brick house? Ah shoots de twenty-eight!"

"Dass all right. But Ah doan want no big brick house. Ah kin git along wif a little stingy one. Lessus pinch offen a bit — —"

"Ah shoots de twenty-eight!"

Mo' accepted the inevitable. Already the money to fade the bet was coming forth — accompanied by protestations.

"Da's zackly wha' we does," he announced with a ticklish grin. "We shoots de twenty-eight."

"Shoot de moon, boys. Fo' dolleh, mo' to come!"

"Da's it, shoot de moon."

GRUNTS and whisperings accompanied the final four dollars. The dice rattled hard in a light brown hand. They traveled forth upon the blanket to be blocked, picked up and examined by a sweating "fader", then returned to the bland Mr. Carter. Again they were stopped as they came forth, while Mo's bulging eyes watched the move. Then for the third time they came rolling out, to settle, two fives glaring upward. A rattling sigh escaped the Lexington ice-jerker.

"Big Ben!" he gasped. "Ah knowed we ought t've pinched — —"

"Ah kin make Big Ben!"

"A dollah say you cain't — —"

"Ah kin make Big Ben," droned the brown Mr. Carter, ignoring the further invitation to bet. "Six 'n' fo'! Five 'n' five! C'mon, Big Ben — —"

"Da's our point. Ole Big Ben — —"

"Six a-a-a-n' a fo'! Five a-a-a-a-n' a five! Wheh is yo' at? Big Ben! C'mon!"

"Out on a lim'," sounded a voice across the way. "Out on a long, lean, slipp'ry lim' — —"

"Five a-a-a-n' a five. Gwine build a brick house!"

"Da's wh' we is. C'mon, ole Big Ben!"

"Six an' a — look at 'em, gelimun. 'Zamin' [illegible] five an' a five. Ah shoots de — —"

"Ain't goin' shoot no mo' wif me." A "fader" rose and stuffed his hands tight into his pockets.

The action caused a halt for a moment, enlivened suddenly by the announcement of a second loser that he was through, positively and finally. A third looked toward the dapper Mr. Carter, gathering up his winnings from the blanket, while Mo', grinning and pop-eyed, knelt by his side — and he too decided to be content. A fourth, a fifth — the game was over. Mr. Harrison Carter rose, stuffed the money into his pockets, currency in one, coin in the other, and surveyed the room grandly.

"Boys," he announced, "Ah's ovehproud o' yo' kin'ness, an' Ah hopes they ain' no ha'd feelin's. An'— —"

"Yassuh. Da's jis' wha' we does. We — —"

"IS YOU still heah?" Mr. Carter looked up with apparent surprise. Mo' swung his arms and cackled.

"Sho' Ah is. We done buil' 'at brick house, didn' we? Sho' we — —"

"We — we! All d' time we! Ah done it!"

"Sho' you done it — but Ah was he'pin'."

"Sh-h-h-h!" whispered Mr. Carter and led the way to the door, Mo' loping after him in momentary forgetfulness of his sore feet. "Sh-h-h-h."

"Whaffo' you shushin' ataway?"

"Sh-h-h-h! Lissen!" Mr. Carter stood on tiptoe to reach Mo's ear. "We cain' make no divvy in fron' o' all these yere gemmum. 'Twouldn't be zackly 'cordin' to de rules. Nobody but membehs — un'stan'? Nobody but membehs 'lowed. Wheh you reckon to be at in about an houh?"

Mo' hesitated and swung his arms.

"Mostly whe' you is at — if mah foots hol' out."

"Cain' be done, brotheh." Mr. Carter looked mysteriously over a shoulder. "Ah's got to stay heah. Matteh o' private an' pussonel business. Cain' you be somewhehs in 'bout an houh?"

"But Ah doan know no place to be at."

"Does you know wheh de Fus' Babtis' Chu'ch is at?"

No, Mo' didn't know.

"Does you know wheah Slim La'abee's Chitlin' Pa'leh is at?"

Mo' didn't know that either. Mr. Carter scratched his head and gained an inspiration.

"Lissen," came finally. "You go out de do' 'n' tu'n out de alley, same as we com' in."

"Um-humph. Laik when we com' in?"

"You says it, Boy. Then you tu'n to de right 'n' keep right on walkin'."

"Wheh at to does Ah walk?"

"Oh, it doan make much diff'ence. Jis' walk 'long. Ah'll cotch up wiffen you."

"Ah cain' walk ve'y fa'. Mah foots won' hol' out."

"Well," Mr. Carter studied the problem deeply.

"What say you walk fo' o' five blocks 'n' tu'n 'roun' 'n' see ef Ah's comin'. Un'stan'? Ef Ah ain', why jis walk a couple mo' blocks 'n' see ef Ah ain't come by then."

"You's comin' all right?"

"Sho', Boy! 'Cose Ah's comin'. You jis' keep on walkin'. Ah'll cotch up."

"Da's all Ah wants t' know — ef you'll cotch up. You couldn't pinch offen dat seven dolleh befo'han — —"

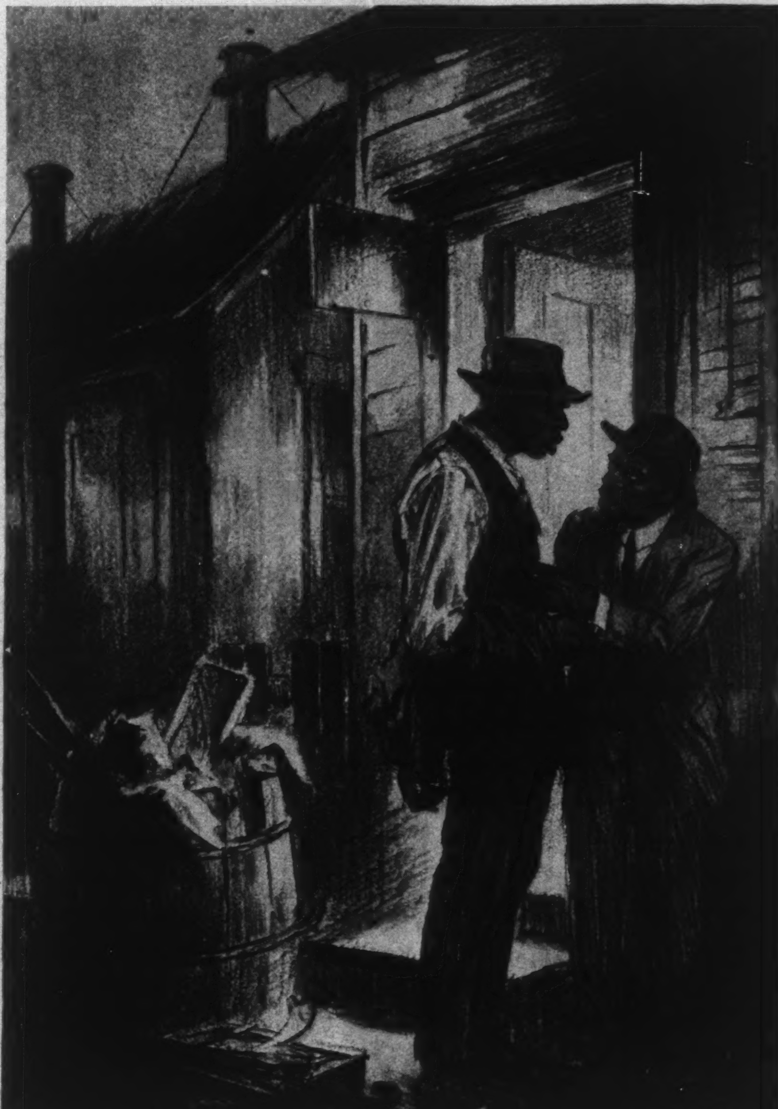
"Sh-h-h-h! Boy! Doan talk 'bout money. It's agin de rules!"

"Da's right. Done fo'gits all 'bout de rules. Ah wish Ah didn't have t' walk so fa'. Dis yere misery in mah foots — —"

"Go on, Boy! You won' minden it. Jis' walk a li'l ways 'n' look 'roun', 'n' walk a li'l ways mo' 'n' look 'roun'— jis' laik that 'n' you won't minden it!"

With which, Mo' Calicotte found himself shoved out the door and started down the alley. Fifty-six dollars depended upon his ability to walk, and gingerly accepting the necessary suffering, he raised one razor-slit shoe and put it forward, to be followed just as gingerly by the other. Three hours of sentry duty beside the crawdad basket of Beelgie Lannin'ham had not served to help the misery in his pedal extremities. He wished more than ever that he had arrived in Kansas City by daylight and that he had found his chiropodist. Then he remembered that fifty-six dollars.

"Hot dog, Boy!" he exclaimed. "Fitty-six dollehs! Gwine git mah foots fixed, git me a new pai' shoes, a yaller suit o' clo's an' 'ten' a ba'becue. Hot dog! Wondeh is dey any good ba'becue comin' off right handy?"



"Now, Ah ast you, is you a reg'leh rassleh, or is you open to reason—and is you willin' to 'blige a lady?" asked the elegant Mr. Carter

He looked at the advertisements on a fence surrounding a near-by excavation, but failed to find the necessary pictures of a steer upon a spit, and the usual lurid announcements to which he was accustomed down in Lexington. So he went on, figuring vaguely upon the myriad things which one could buy with fifty-six dollars. Then he looked around. Mr. Carter wasn't in sight, so he tried another block, as per directions. A third and a fourth block he walked — then stopped in a sudden panic and turned excitedly on the back trail. 'Spose sompin' had happened?

Something had. For after traversing the distance he believed he had walked, investigating every opening and areaway, then taking in a territory for two blocks on each side, Mo' was forced at last to the doleful realization that he couldn't find the right alley! He had taken no mental soundings either upon his arrival or his departure, and now, all alleys looked alike. Only one thing was left to do — walk again, and he did it.

"Wondeh is mah foots gwine hol' out?" he asked himself plaintively after he had crossed the seventh block and, looking over his shoulder for the seventh time, saw no evidence of the elegant Mr. Carter. "Ef he doan come 'long p'etty soon, Ah's gwine jis' plain die wif de misery!"

But Mr. Carter didn't come. And about the time Mo' had passed the fifteenth block, his slow-working brain began to wonder if Mr. Carter ever intended coming at all. He thought about that — and the misery in his feet — for two blocks more, finally to make the decision. There was something wrong, something very radically wrong. But still, Mr. Carter must be accorded the benefit of the doubt.

"Mebbe Ah done miss him when Ah'm ci'cl'izin' up dem alleys," he mused in full-voiced agitation. "Mebbe — —"

"Was you speakin' to me?"

Mo' stopped short. The voice had come in distinctly feminine tones from across the street where Mo' had casually noticed two shadowy figures in close confab. But now the conversation had ceased and the feminine member of the twain had detached herself, to come toward him.

"It jus' mus' be you! I'd reck'nize yo' voice in a thousand — —"

Mo' stared, speechless. On she came, then with a little shriek, broke into a run.

"O' 'cose it's you! What you doin' up heah, anyhow? An' how is ev'body in Ca'ollton?"

Another bound and she had reached him, bringing with her a breath of perfume which to Mo' spelled riches and aristocracy, position and prestige. With another feminine squeak, she seized his hand and bent close.

"Is you a gellmun?" she whispered.

"Um-humph."

"Then save a culled lady what needs yo' he'p. What moughten yo' name be? Quick!"

Mo' whispered it excitedly. She seized him by the arm, and led him, or rather wafted him, upon the clouds of that perfume, across the street, calling him by his first name as she asked him questions regarding persons of whom he never had heard. Half-way across, she bent close again.

"Call me Cousin Thelmia," she ordered, and Mo', even forgetting his feet, repeated the name. They crossed the last twenty feet and Mo' found himself shifting aimlessly, and staring down at a round-headed block-shouldered person in a red sweater, a bulgy appearing person with a lot of muscles, and a broken nose, showing dimly beneath a low-drawn cap. Cousin Thelmia burst forth again.

"Didn't I say it was him?" she asked enthusiastically.

"Say who was him?"

"WHY, Cousin Mo', o' 'cose! Doan you rec'leck me tellin' you 'bout — —"

"Didn' nev' tole me nuffin 'bout nobody," came again in a grouchy voice. Cousin Thelmia gasped at the very outrageousness of such a statement.

"Ethelbe't Jo'dan, how you kin talk! Like's if I nev' tole you 'bout Mo' Cal'cotte from Ca'ollton!"

Mo' opened his big lips to correct the name of habitation to Lexington, but she blocked him.

"Seein' same is sech," she said in dignified tones, "I 'spose I'll have t' unde'go the fo'mal'ties of an intu'duction. Cousin Mo', this yere's my husban', Ethelbe't Jo'dan, 'bouten who I has wrote you so offen."

"Yassum. Evenin', Mistah Jo'dan. Ah's sho — —"

"An' this yere's mah Cousin Mo' Cal'cotte from Ca'ollton. Doan you 'membeh, Ethelbe't, me tellin' you 'bouten my cousin wrasslin' all oveh the state an'— —"

"Is you a rassleh?" Ethelbe't came to surly life. Mo' hesitated and Cousin Thelmia filled the breach.

"'Cose he's a wrassleh. He done wrassle in Sain' Louis, an' Mobehly, an' Gran' Pass an' p'etty nigh ev'wheh. Ain't you, Cousin Mo'?"

"Yassum." Mo' said it dazedly as he shifted from one foot to the other. She went on, with a new burst of enthusiasm.

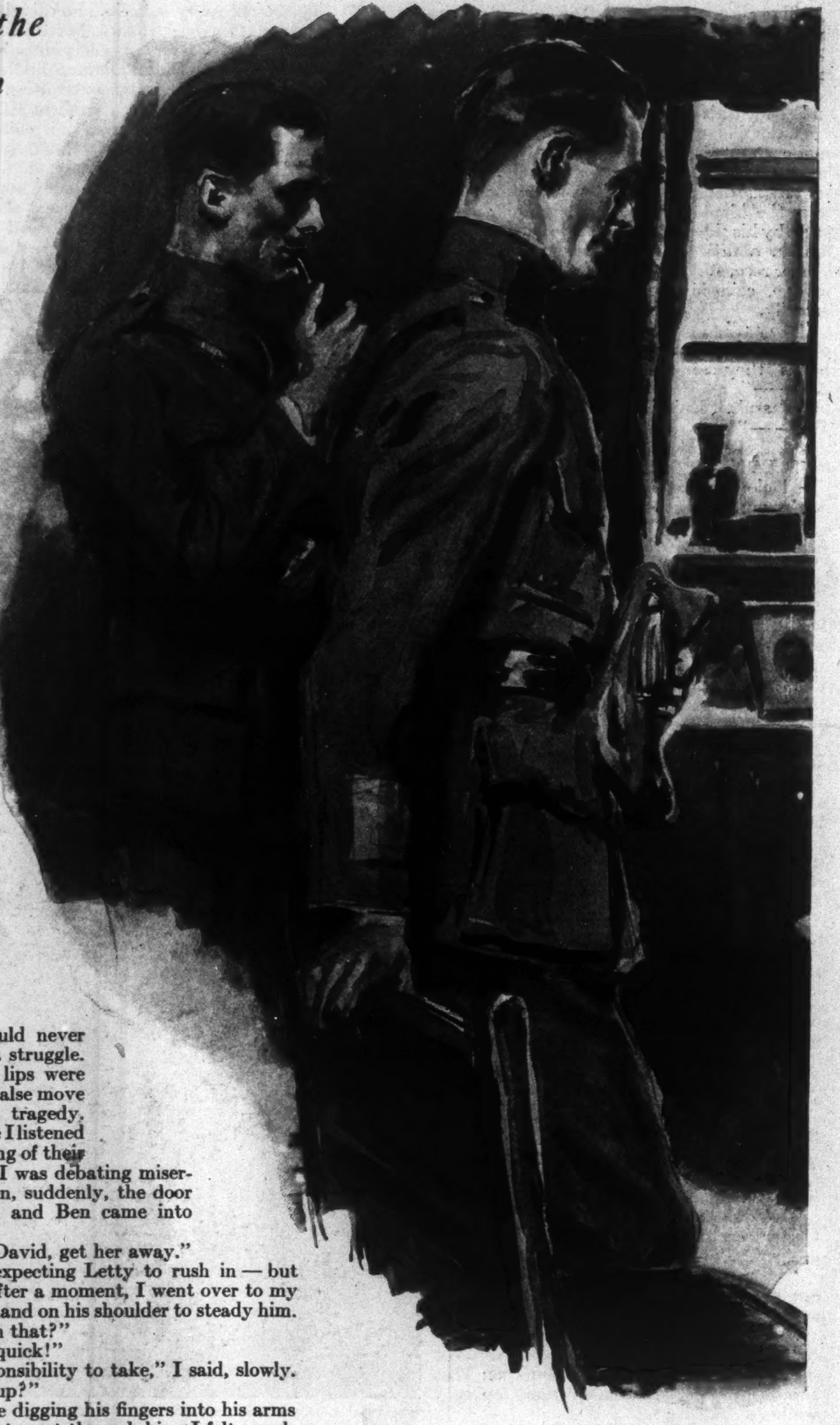
"They done give Cousin Mo' a medal for wrasslin' in the army." Then after a slight pause: "Laws, we got mo' to talk 'bout. Fack is, [*Continued on page 52*]

The Three Brothers Come Through the Road of Sorrow and Sacrifice to an Understanding of One Another

The Wasted Generation

by Owen Johnson

Illustrations by James Montgomery Flagg



LITTLEDALE had just bade farewell to his family, his mother, father, and sister Molly, and to Anne Brinsmade, who, at the last moment, had told him: "I'm not in love with you, David, but I can imagine — some day — if I was — well, marrying you!" And he had answered: "Anne, dear, I feel as you do. I am not in love with you and yet I can imagine that marrying you would bring me great happiness. I wish I could say more."

He had just told her very gently how he had fallen in love with Bernoline (Mlle. Duvernoy), whom he had met on shipboard coming from France. And of how Bernoline had put him out of her life, although caring for him, because of some deep, mysterious trouble that had caused her to leave her home and people and come to America alone.

David was now returning to France to rejoin his regiment in the French army, and he was taking his brother Ben with him — Ben, who was desperately unhappy in his marriage to Letty, a girl with whom David had had an unfortunate affair in Paris.

Just before sailing David's desire to see Bernoline led him to the convent where she was staying, despite his promise not to seek her. After a pitiful scene she finally agreed to write him at least until the end of the war.

David's diary continues:

LETTY WAS in the salon that separated Ben's room from mine when I entered, and from the look on Ben's face I saw that his soul was being torn to its foundations. At my entrance they stopped, in a sudden telltale silence.

"You here, Letty?" I said, stupidly enough. God knows that no more unwelcome figure could have come before me at that moment.

She nodded curtly, but did not speak. She looked quite worn despite her artifice and in her cold face the eyes burned forth as they did only when she was roused to some fury of obstinate determination. The conversation had been at a high tension, as I could see by Ben's ugly frown. I went into my bedroom and closed the door. Overcome by the moral nausea of this malignant intrusion across the clean memory of the evening's exaltation, I sank on the bed and, taking my head in my hands, cursed her from the bitterness of my heart as I have never cursed another human being.

Not that she had come to see me. I knew too well the only genuine impulse of which, in her tired experience, she was capable. It was only the prey which was escaping her that could rouse the woman in her. I did not know how far Ben had gone in his revolt — though I suspected that he had given an ultimatum. But I knew this, that Letty would never let him go without a struggle. What to do! My lips were sealed; the slightest false move might precipitate a tragedy. An hour passed, while I listened to the falling and rising of their contending voices. I was debating miserably what to do when, suddenly, the door opened and banged, and Ben came into the room.

"For God's sake, David, get her away."

I sprang up, half expecting Letty to rush in — but she did not — and, after a moment, I went over to my brother and laid my hand on his shoulder to steady him.

"Ben, do you mean that?"

"Get her away — quick!"

"That's a big responsibility to take," I said, slowly. "Your mind's made up?"

He stood before me digging his fingers into his arms and, in the breath that went through him, I felt a sudden vacillation.

"Ben," I said, sternly. "Stick to your guns. Care for you? All she cares is to know she can make you suffer. Sit down."

I went on tiptoe to the door and flung it open. As I had known, she was there, listening. But it is dangerous to try even such a woman as Letty too far, and the blind rage I saw in her face at this exposure so frightened me that, closing the door behind me, I clapped my hand over her mouth and picked her up bodily.

"The scene is over, and you're going out of here now," I said, savagely, carrying her to the door of the *salon*. She did not struggle but suddenly became quiet and inert and, with the devilish instinct that was in her to wound me, her arms closed softly about my neck. I wrenched myself free, with loathing in my nostrils for that hated perfume of her body, and set her down in the hall.

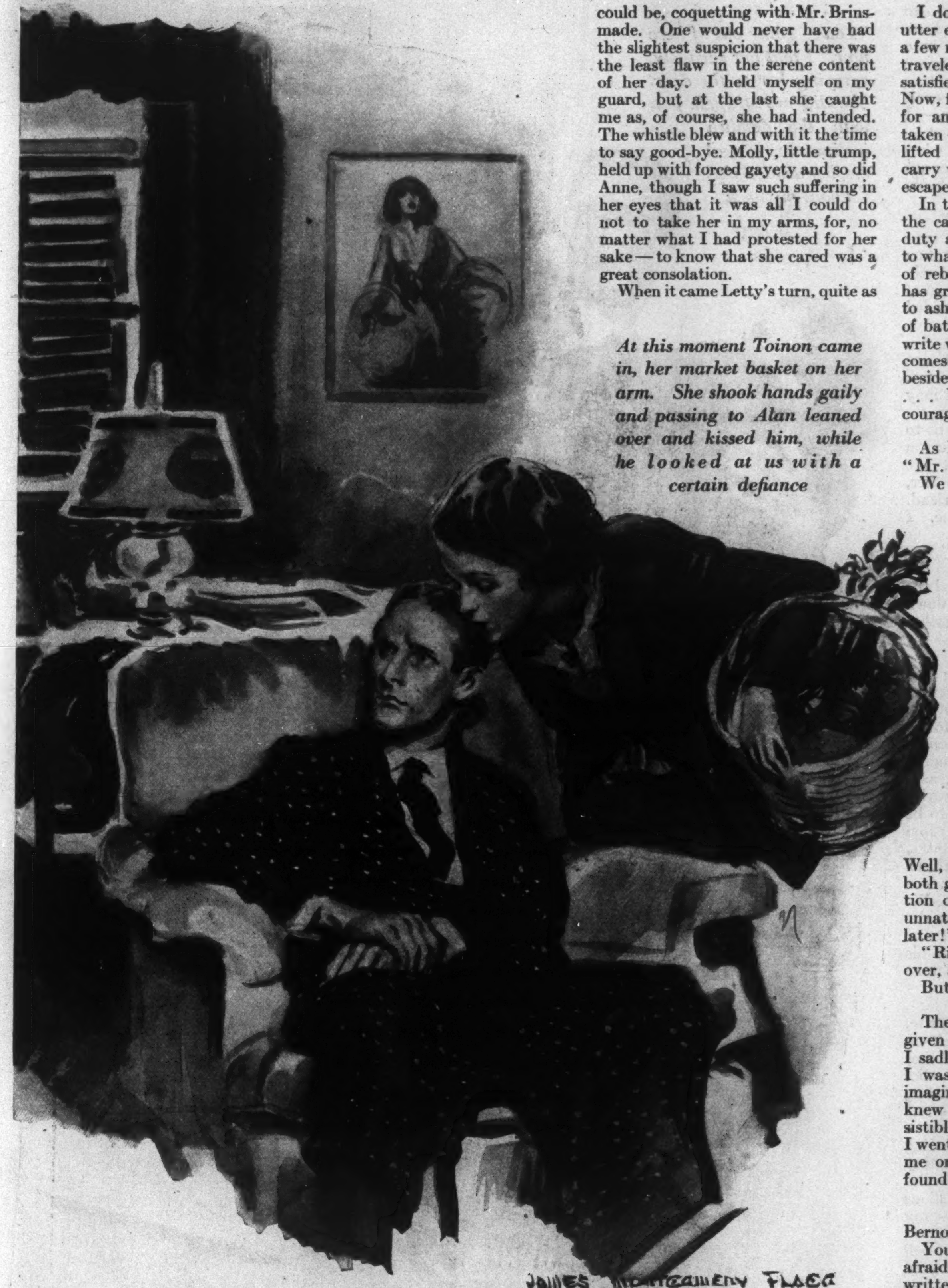
"So, you have told him," she said, quickly, keen for the pretense at dramatics.

"If I had, you wouldn't be alive now," I said, and closed and locked the door and, for further security, slipped the key into my pocket.

It is four o'clock in the morning now, as I finish these lines in my diary. I can hear Ben in the adjoining room, walking restlessly, up and down, up and down.

At Sea

We sailed at noon. Molly and Anne were on the dock to see us off — and Letty — to plant a final sting. Anne came in after breakfast with her father, and with Molly we went down to the boat. I do not know when I have been so sorry for any one as I was for Anne. What fatality ever impelled her to come into my life at just that moment? She came in so happily that at the first instant my heart fell, for I saw that our last interview in Littledale had left the way to the future open to her. Yet she had not been ten minutes with me before her woman's intuitions had warned her that something had happened. I saw the light manner change to a sudden meditation and always when I turned my head her eyes were on me in anxious interrogation. Poor child, I would have spared her the pain, but it was not to be. The moment we were left alone together on the dark and pungent wharf, she turned to me impulsively and in a strained voice said:



At this moment Toinon came in, her market basket on her arm. She shook hands gaily and passing to Alan leaned over and kissed him, while he looked at us with a certain defiance

"David, you have seen her?"

"Yes."

I took her arm and led her a little apart, to a nook where we were hidden from the crowd.

"Anne — for God's sake, put me out of your life," I said, taking her hand. "There is only misery and unhappiness if you don't. This is honest, because I must be honest with you."

"I can't put you out of my life," she said, shaking her head, "and if you are unhappy — all the more reason for me to stay in yours."

"Anne, it is not fair to you — to what your life may be."

"Let me be the judge of that, David," she said, soberly, her hand on my arm. "Have I the right to know this? Is it — the other — still quite hopeless?"

"Quite," I said, gloomily.

"David, my heart goes out to you. If I could only help. No — no. . . . Don't go back yet. Wait here just a moment."

"All right, now?"

"All right, David."

And when we went back, there was Letty, her arm through Molly's, as pretty and as enticing as the most could be, coquetting with Mr. Brinsmade. One would never have had the slightest suspicion that there was the least flaw in the serene content of her day. I held myself on my guard, but at the last she caught me as, of course, she had intended. The whistle blew and with it the time to say good-bye. Molly, little trump, held up with forced gayety and so did Anne, though I saw such suffering in her eyes that it was all I could do not to take her in my arms, for, no matter what I had protested for her sake — to know that she cared was a great consolation.

When it came Letty's turn, quite as natural thing in the world (as, of course, to the others it was), she flung her arms about me and kissed me, there — before Ben. Then she went off, protesting it was bad luck to see a ship out of port — well pleased with having planted a last dart. And Ben and I, with that kiss between us, went up the gangway.

"I hope to God I never lay eyes on her again!" he said, with an oath.

If only that may be true!

We went to the promenade deck and stood over the stern, gazing back at the shores that began to recede. The waters rushed in between the wharf and us. I saw Molly and Anne in the crowd and raised my hat, swinging it slowly back and forth. And as I looked into that fading throng my heart leaped a little at the thought that perhaps she, Bernoline, might be standing there, come down for a last look — a quite irrational thought — yet I felt as though she were there — there in the human shadow, unrecognizable, now nothing more than a spotted shadow against the pier, the pier which ran back into the oblivion of the city — the city which sank slowly into the sky.

I do not remember since boyhood to have felt the utter empty loneliness of life as at that moment. But a few months before I had been self-sufficient, a curious traveler, emerging from one experience, eager for others, satisfied and interested with the contact of my kind. Now, for what had come into my life in one short week, for an hour in the twilight — for a look given and taken — a voice remembered, I felt all at once rudely lifted out of the companionship of men, doomed to carry with me a solitude from which there would be no escape.

In this weakness of the spirit I even rebelled against the call which took me back — the inexorable call of duty and honor which, after all, is only our yielding to what others may think of us; at least, in that moment of rebellion, that is what I felt! For, now that life has grown so precious to me, even though I but cling to ashes of hope — I wonder how in the coming days of battle I shall stand the test. . . . Yet now that I write with a clearer discipline, a new feeling of reverence comes to me as I think of the men of France who fought beside me, with memories and hopes in their hearts. . . . What others have done I can do. All our vaunted courage is nothing more than that.

As Ben and I stood there, a cabin boy hailed us: "Mr. Littledale? A special delivery for you, sir."

We both turned, hastily.

"Which Mr. Littledale?"

"David Littledale, sir."

"That's right. It's for me."

I took the letter and at the first glance, though I had never seen her handwriting, I knew it was from Bernoline.

"David!"

Ben's hand closed over my wrist, and I looked up to see his eyes ablaze with jealousy and suspicion.

"David, show me that letter."

I held it before him, and he gave it one wild look and turned away.

"Ben, old fellow, get hold of yourself!"

"I feel like jumping over and swimming for it," he said, miserably.

"To-morrow you'll be thanking God from the bottom of your heart," I said, linking my arm under his. "Do you remember once when you came between me and making a fool of myself, and how we fought and rolled on the ground? Well, my turn, now. It's a queer world, and we've both got to grin and bear things. But it isn't a question of love, Ben. It's just been slavery — a weak, unnatural, humiliating slavery. Better now than later!"

"Right! Sorry I made such an ass of myself. It's over, and, David, that's the last I'll ever see of her."

But I am not so sure of that.

The letter was crumpled in my hand. To have given courage to Ben gave me a sort of courage, which I sadly needed. I did not at once open and read it. I was afraid. I was afraid of a hundred nameless imagined fears, but most of all of the sure reaction I knew must come in her woman's heart, once the irresistible spell of our coming together had been broken. I went below, into the saloon, and laid her letter before me on the desk. Then, with a sudden inspiration, I found a sheet of paper and wrote:

"Sailing Down the Harbor

Bernoline, dear:

Your letter is here, before my eyes; and I am still afraid to open it. I shall not read it until I have written this. For I feel already what you will say. Bernoline, no matter what the obstacle which stands between us, it can alter nothing. While you live and I live, we are powerless to change what fate has laid upon us. As for me, just to know your love is to me so great a thing that if I had to choose again with open eyes I would choose all I have suffered and all that may come to me — all the heartburnings — and all the daily, hourly longing, the cruelty of separation — all — just to have seen your eyes at parting. Let us be to each other what is right that we should be — the rest is beyond our knowledge. I have strength for everything but one thing — not to hear from you again.

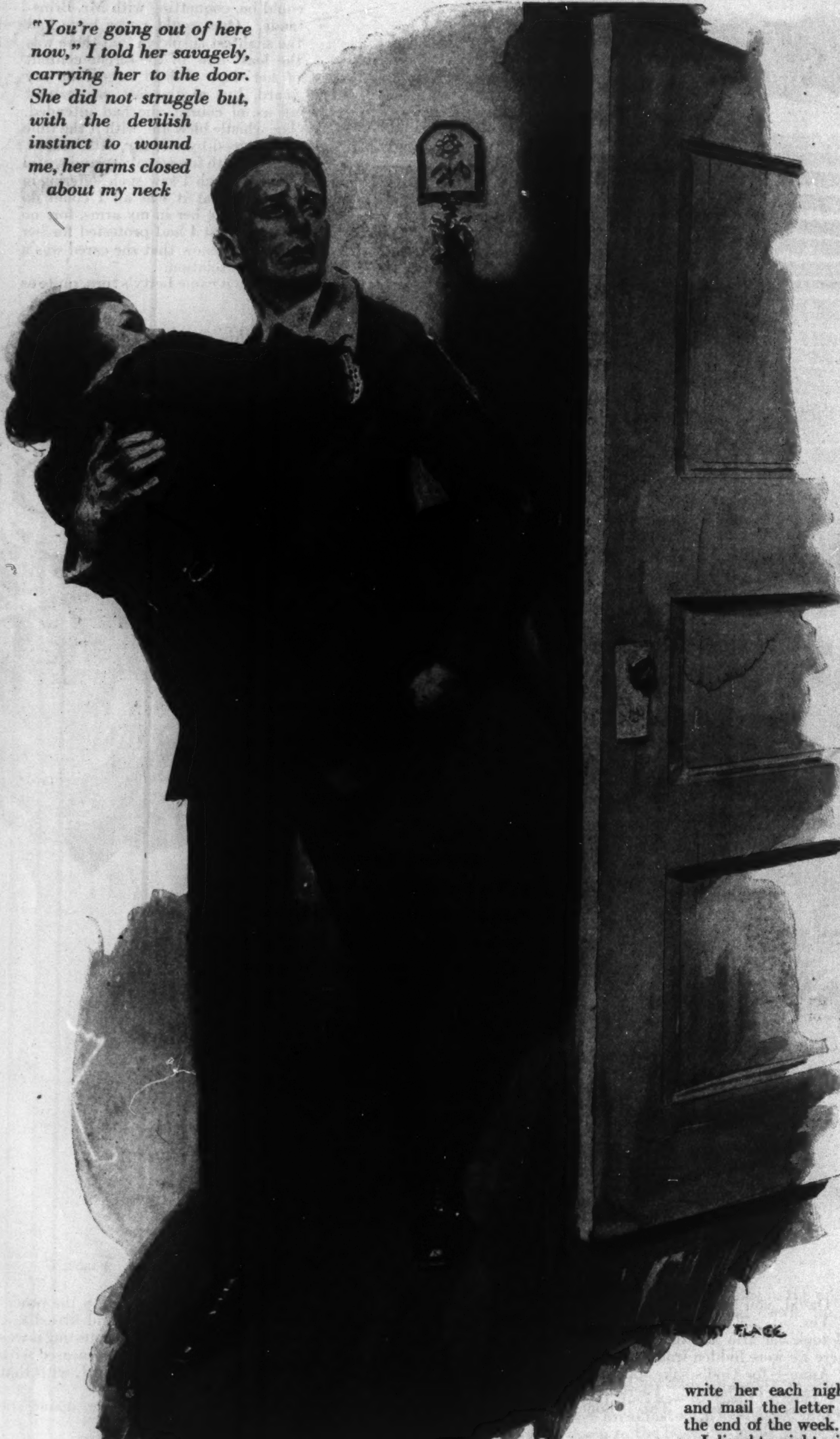
David."

Then I took up her letter, and read:

"Midnight

Mon ami seul:

I have prayed on my knees for hours to see my way clear. For I no longer know myself. I, who thought myself so strong, have had so little strength. All that I have determined not to do, I have done. And yet, when you were at my side I could not do otherwise. When you are near me all my courage leaves me and I



"You're going out of here now," I told her savagely, carrying her to the door. She did not struggle but, with the devilish instinct to wound me, her arms closed about my neck

do not know what I do or say. And it is I who am to protect you. But you — is it not your whole life I am wrecking? Would it not be better to have you hate me than to do what I am doing? Is it not a great crime I am committing? For, David, my dear David, it *cannot* be. There is no hope for us, now, or ever. What shall I do? To-night, my heart is torn — I cannot think. I have given my promise, and yet — Oh, David, I want to do what is best for you, and what seems cruel now may be the kindest later. I cannot decide. What shall I do? Have courage for us both. Be strong for me.

B."

I read this through once, with heavy heart — then many times. To give her up was beyond my strength, though something within me admitted the truth of what she wrote. I took up my letter again, and added this postscript:

"I have finished your letter, and I would not change a word of this. You leave the decision to me. I make it, and I take on my shoulders all that may come. I cannot do otherwise. I need your strength. I shall always need it. The fate that has sent us to each other is more mysterious than our little reason can fathom. Yet in it there must be some purpose. We can never harm each other. One thing is life, the other, worse than death. Write to me, dear little friend. Give me only what it is right for you to give me. I shall ask no more.

David."

I put the letter myself into the bag, and watched the pilot go over the side of the ship. Then, I went down to my cabin and got out my *poilu's* uniform. Another milestone passed.

Some mysterious influence seems to be watching over me — perhaps Mr. Brinsmade, for his hand is powerful here and a request from him would undoubtedly be acceded to. At any rate, on my return I found orders for me to report temporarily at the *Bureau de la Presse* as an interpreter. At any other time I should resent this, but now — frankly, I am glad of it, as I want to be able to transfer into the American service as soon as we declare war, and to be in Paris is to be where friends and influence can expedite matters. Ben goes into the Morgan-Harjes ambulance for six months, and leaves at the end of the week. He is more taciturn than ever, but the feeling of being in a great current — a man among men, is, I know, a great relief to him. We have never discussed Letty since the day of our departure, when he gave me to understand that the separation was definite. I am still in the dark as to his real thoughts. Sometimes, I catch his glance on mine (quickly averted) and I wonder. . . .

The coming back to it all, much to my surprise, seemed the most natural thing in the world. I felt no special thrill, no strangeness and (this surprised me) not the slightest revolt. In some ways it was a relief from my thoughts, from my own little existence battling against the currents of destiny.

YES, I except one moment — the day of our landing at Bordeaux, when the shifting turns of my destiny were brought before me in a sudden dramatic revelation. We were at the rail, looking down at the tedious process of tying up to the dock. A number of blue-gray recruits were straggling out of wine-shops, lounging on the piers, watching our arrival. Suddenly, at the call of a bugle, the gray, loosely flung shadows contracted into a serried mass, took shape and alignment, and — became an entity. Another command, and a hundred feet swung forward, a hundred arms rippled over one body, and an idea set to purpose, passed up the street. A moment before they were identities — free as I still was, free to turn, to sit, to rise, to jump and to run; the next, all human semblance sunk into the anonymity of a machine. It is glorious. It stirs me as nothing else has the power to stir the blood, this groping become an idea, this confusion crystallized into an irresistible purpose, this visualization of man moving as history moves. Yet, that moment, it terrified me with its actuality.

At Bordeaux, I bade Ben good-bye, and became once more Sergeant Littledale, soldier of France. It is the dirt and the filth that are hard to accept — the feeling of being of the cattle of war.

From there to Paris, in a steaming mass of human flesh, crowded into box cars. No longer the swinging enthusiasm of the mobilization — instead a comradeship become the ox-like acceptance of a fate which has fatigued the imagination into indifference. But the return is always hideous. At Paris, to the medical inspection, and the surprise of being detached and transferred. Perhaps, the imminence of our entry into the war, which can be but a matter of days, is much in my good fortune.

My new detail gives me quite a little liberty, as some of my superiors are old friends of social days, and I am permitted to sleep at the hotel with Ben, who was astonished when I walked in. To-morrow we are going over to see Alan. I am a little apprehensive of how he will receive Ben. No letter yet from Bernoline. I write her each night, and mail the letter at the end of the week.

I dined to-night with Ben at an out-of-the-way restaurant of older days, across the Seine, at *l'Avenues*, where boys of thirteen and fourteen masqueraded as waiters and told us of the toll of death. My old *sommelier*, who always kept a special bottle for me (or made me think he did), is gone, dead in the fight around the Labyrinth. New faces everywhere. Afterward we walked back, silently, across the blackened city, stumbling down old Paris toward the dim blur of a hooded light. Occasionally a star detached itself from the Milky Way and went wandering like a great firefly where, above us, a sentinel airplane patrolled the sky.

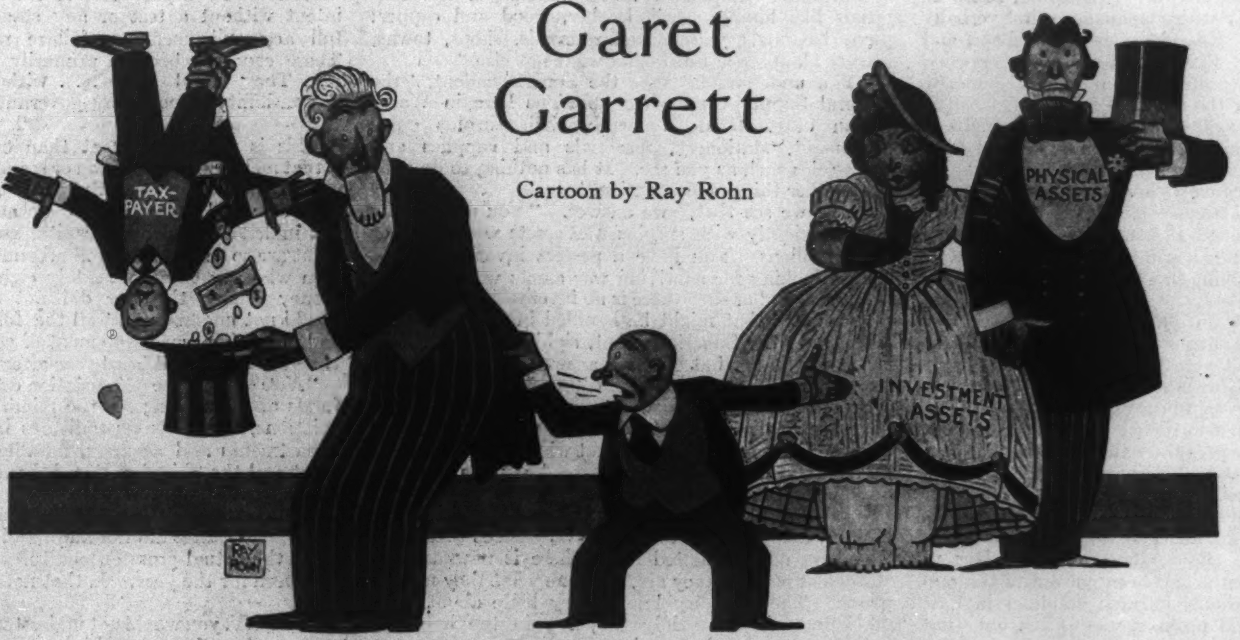
[*Continued on page 44*]

Look *in* Uncle Sam's Boot!

There You Will Find the Tax Payers' Missing Billions

by Garet Garrett

Cartoon by Ray Rohn



DOCILE taxpayer, let's forget and pretend. Let's forget that we are a magical paying device consecrated to the uses of an abstract thing called government. Let's pretend that we have also rights — among them the right to ask questions and demand answers about the assets of the government.

It *is* our government. Its assets *are* our assets. Its only source of wealth is *our* pocket.

In the exercise of this pleasant fantasy we come first of all places to the United States Treasury. We approach what is architecturally the main entrance, and read: "No Admittance." We walk four blocks around to the other end and read again: "No Admittance." Then we are directed to a little door at the side, which is the only public entrance, and there encounter the Captain of the Watch.

"What is it?" he asks.

He sits at a desk in a vault-like room filled with burglar alarms, telephones and automatic recording instruments. Several silent men in uniform are standing around. We try to remember that it is *our* Treasury and that these are *our* servants, if you please, and resolve that our fantasy shall not break down at the first contact with reality. We answer him definitely, saying:

"We wish to talk to some responsible person about the assets of the government."

His eyebrows move. The silent men in uniform become attentive.

"You have no appointment?" asks the Captain of the Watch.

"No. We have no appointment."

"Where is your card?"

"This is our card," we answer, producing an income tax receipt. "We are a taxpayer. In a collective way of speaking, we are a million taxpayers. The rest of them couldn't come. We are delegated. We wish to talk to some one about the assets of the government — the things our money is spent for."

The men in uniform come closer, and we are regarded with deep distrust. For several moments we are in danger of being handed over to the Washington police. But the Captain of the Watch is a man of refined suspicions. A taxpayer as such, exercising rights of inquiry in this naïve manner, passes the probable limits of insanity. Therefore, it is possible that we are not crazy — only pretending.

"Do you represent any one — a newspaper perhaps?" he asks.

"A magazine," we confess, weakly.

He wavers, attends to some other matters absently while he thinks, then beckons to one of the silent men to take charge of us, saying:

> *"We, the taxpayers, who fill the national money bowl, should like to know something about the assets of the government—as against its liabilities"*

"Let him speak to some one in the Secretary's office."

A few words in the outer office of the Secretary of the Treasury establish our harmlessness. We are only whimsical. The man in uniform is dismissed. Then we have to say it all over again. We are, in a vicarious sense, a million taxpayers, more or less, and we wish to talk about the assets of the government.

Assets is a word almost unknown in the conduct of the government's business. It isn't very clear to any one what we mean by assets. If we mean finances, then we shall have to make an appointment to see the Secretary.

But we do not mean finances. We mean *assets* — things, that is to say, physical properties for which the taxpayer has paid.

OH! That is what we mean? Well, then, we should talk perhaps to one of the assistants. The question is, which one? The Treasury is filled with assistants. There are assistant secretaries *of* the Treasury, assistants *to* the assistant secretaries of the Treasury, assistant assistants, assistants right, assistants left, each one precisely different. We come at length to the right one, a super-assistant, who knows everything — the very man.

"Yes," he says, when we are alone and comfortable. "Now what is it we can do for you?"

We say it again. We are millions of taxpayers, if he will accept a figure of speech. We are of those who fill the national money bowl out of which forty billions of dollars have been spent in three years. That is $1,600 for each household in the land, obtained by taxation and loans and spent by the government. Now, we should like to know something about the surviving assets — where they are, what they are and what they may be worth. Where, for one thing, may we find a simple inventory of assets, such as any business corporation would keep?

"In that sense, of course, the government is not a business," says the assistant, beginning already to be patient. "Assets are things which have a convertible value. If you are a corporation you set up what is called a balance sheet. On one side are your assets; on the other side are your liabilities. The purpose is to show theoretically what would happen if you were obliged to go out of business. If the salable value of your assets is equal to your liabilities, then you are a solvent corporation. That is, you could sell your assets for enough to pay off your debts."

"That's it, exactly," we say. "Has the government such a balance sheet?"

"Oh, is that what you want?" he says. "Regularly the Treasury publishes a balance sheet, showing current assets and current liabilities. Here is one."

"But this," we say, returning it, "is a current financial statement only. It shows on one side gold and silver and bank deposits as assets, and, on the other side, gold certificates, paper money and accounts payable as liabilities. What we mean is a balance sheet showing, on one side, the properties, that is, the physical assets of the government, against its total outstanding liabilities or debt on the other side."

"As I was trying to say," the Assistant continues, "a government has no assets in that sense. The Capitol and its grounds, the Treasury building we sit in, the White House, the Navy, the national parks — these are all properties that have cost a great deal of money, but as none of them could be sold to pay off the government's liabilities they cannot be called assets."

"We know that ordinarily a government has no assets that may be liquidated to pay off its debts," we say. "But this is not ordinarily. As a result of its enormous war expenditures the government at the present time is in possession of a vast quantity of actual, convertible assets — surplus war properties, physical things, in great variety. Is there no inventory of such assets?"

"Oh, that!" says the Assistant, much brightened. "I didn't get you at first. Here is what you want on page 575 of the last annual report of the Secretary of the Treasury — a statement of the surplus war material in the hands of the General Supply Committee."

He went on to explain what had happened. After the armistice the President issued an executive order saying that whereas the cessation of war activities had created an emergency in which great quantities of costly materials, supplies, equipment, etc., were fallen suddenly into disuse and would be cast upon a junk heap unless salvaged in some efficient manner. Therefore, be every one enjoined to stand upon the following procedure: First, all such surplus war property to be transferred directly to the Secretary of the Treasury, who would turn it over to the General Supply Committee to be stored, conserved and held in suspense for the future benefit of the government. Second, no department or bureau of the government to buy any new thing without having first ascertained that what it required was not in the stores of the General Supply Committee.

"Excellent!" we exclaim. "Taxpayers will be enormously pleased. May we see the stuff?"

"See it?" says the Assistant, dubiously.

"Yes," we say. "We wish to see it. May we be introduced to the General Supply Committee, please?"

"It would take days to see the stuff," says the Assistant, discouraged.

"No matter," we answer. "That the government's surplus assets are being handled in this manner is sensational news. Sceptics will not believe it unless we can bear witness of the senses. It seems — may we say it? — it seems incredible."

Buttons begin to be pressed. Various persons are summoned. Our whim has to be translated, so far as may be, into official Treasury language — first verbally and then in writing. Everybody is very solemn and impersonal. Nothing like this has ever happened before. However, the pretense of our being a composite taxpayer will not bear the strain of formality. Not as a taxpayer but as a magazine writer we are brought at length to the attention of the Superintendent of Supplies, head of the General Supply Committee.

That official receives us with embracings and transports of affection. Though it is in a little obscure corner of the Government Printing Office that you do a great thing, still in time it will be found out. Here at last was publicity, walking in at the door.

HE TELLS us how, in obedience to the executive order, thousands of tons of miscellaneous material, supplies and equipment were dumped down on his doorstep. When the armistice was signed the dollar-a-year men who had been serving the government rose up from their desks and returned to their civil jobs. Hundreds of offices with all their paraphernalia were simply abandoned, or left in the hands of clerks and typists who had no idea what to do with the wreckage until the order was promulgated, naming the General Supply Committee receiver of everything loose, movable and unclaimed. The deluge followed. First, there was no place to put the stuff, and when it had been got out of the rain into a group of abandoned barrack buildings in East Potomac Park, the next problem was to find out what it was, or how to organize the largest second-hand business in the history of changeable humankind. This was accomplished most efficiently by means of a card index. For each item, piece or lot there had been made a separate card, on which was written the exact description, the place it came from, the original cost and the appraised use value.

"So that now, you see, we have a complete and perfect inventory," says the Superintendent, setting a flourish to his narrative.

"It contains some odd items," we say, looking over a classified list of materials, equipment and supplies. "For example, this one — 1,003 hatchets."

"Give me the card on hatchets," says the Superintendent to the nearest clerk. Out it comes, and thereon is a history of the hatchets. They had come from various places — from the Food Administration, for one.

"A strange lot to appear among the government's surplus assets," we say.

"Not the strangest," says the Superintendent. Then to the clerk: "Give me the card on roller skates."

One of the war boards, finding itself housed in a building with very long corridors, had tried putting its messengers on roller skates, and here were the skates, written up on a card, showing their origin, cost price, condition and present value.

"Is the government likely ever to want roller skates again?" we ask.

"Who knows?" says the Superintendent. "We've just had a call from the Department of Agriculture for a *papier-mâché* cow."

"Did you have it?"

"No. It's about the only thing we haven't got. You will see."

With that we go to an ash-filled swamp, named East Potomac Park, and there are the barrack buildings in long rows, each one stuffed like a Noah's Ark with the things the War god kicked aside when he stalked off the scene in the manner of a ruined speculator. We see the hatchets — just ordinary wood-shed hatchets. Also wrenches and screwdrivers by the gross, and hardware of all kinds, enough to stock a wholesale store. We see desks, tables, chairs and filing cabinets enough to have caused a panic in the second-hand furniture trade. Some of the cabinets have the war records inside of them still. We see miles of typewriters, a half-acre of electric fans, moving picture outfits, printing machines, tons of paper, millions of filing cards, dishes, beds and bedding, refrigerators, cooking ranges, adding machines, ink wells in thousands, 1,300 waste-baskets, leather goods, glassware, things the uses of which were not to be guessed — and in one corner, standing agley, the brass mounted directory of the United States Fuel Administration. Most of this stuff has already been put in order and classified. The desks are going through a cabinet shop to be restored and refinished; the typewriters are going through a repair shop, and so on. The government will have no need to buy a new typewriter for years to come.

"Is this all?" we ask.

The Superintendent is awfully let down. "Is this all?" he says, returning the question. "What do you mean — all?"

"We are thinking of ships."

"There are no ships here," he says.

"Of course not. We are only thinking of them — ships, shipyards, hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of industrial equipment, vast quantities of raw materials like lumber, steel, leather, wood and copper; piers, terminals, warehouses, railroads, shops, towns, nitrate plants, real estate and what not else."

"You understand," says the Superintendent, "the General Supply Committee functions here in Washington only. It deals merely with surplus office equipment, stationery, materials and supplies and accessories such as you see. It has nothing to do with those other things you mention."

"Yes, we see that," we answer. "You are dealing most efficiently with surplus war assets worth two or three millions. You have a perfect inventory. But we are looking for surviving war assets worth *billions* of dollars, and of such there is no inventory at all."

"Much of that might be handled in just this same way," says the Superintendent, sighing with a vision.

"It might be, indeed," we answer. "We are concerned with the fact that it isn't."

So our journey to East Potomac Park turns out to have been a diversion. The goods and chattels stored in those barrack buildings are not what the accountants call capital assets. They are, instead, surplus materials on hand, all in time to be used up by the government.

Capital assets, free and convertible, running into the billions, are scattered all the way to chaos and back. They are not accounted for. There is nowhere any statement of what they are, let alone what they may be worth. The Treasury knows very little about them officially, because mainly they are in the hands of outside, government-owned corporations doing business quite independently of the Treasury, each existing by a law of its own.

During the war the government took a leaf from the book of high finance and became itself a holding company, owning the stocks of separately organized corporations and agencies specifically created to do certain things in an extraordinary manner. They were set up in business by acts of Congress, provided with enormous grants of capital and so-called revolving funds which they could use over and over at their own discretion. Each was meant to be independent in its own sphere. They were permitted to keep their own books and to audit their own expenditures; they used the Treasury simply as a bank to honor its checks, and they were responsible only to Congress.

The largest of these independent instrumentalities were:

The United States Shipping Board.

The Emergency Fleet Corporation, to produce ships (controlled by the Shipping Board).

The United States Housing Corporation, to produce houses for war workers.

The United States Food Administration.

The United States Grain Corporation, to guarantee the price of the wheat crop (controlled by the Food Administration).

The War Finance Corporation, to assist war trade by loans, etc.

The Railroad Administration, to finance and work the railroads.

The gross expenditures of these organizations amounted, approximately, to one-quarter of the total cost of the war.

Their achievements were momentous. As war agencies they justified their existence, and as for what they cost, it is well to remember that while we were in the war we said: "Do the things. Be reckless. Plunge, and damn the cost."

It was intended that they should have unusual freedom of action and be immune from the tyrannies of red tape. This was, in fact, essential. Nevertheless, their untrammeled activities did complicate government finance in a bewildering manner, both for reasons that are obvious and for other reasons set forth by the former Secretary of the Treasury, Carter Glass, in his last report to Congress, urging that they be either discontinued altogether or brought under the ordinary regulations. He said:

"Government officers charged with administrative achievement are charged at the same time with obedience to the restrictions placed upon the use of appropriated funds, and the object of their endeavor is thus made twofold. A proper regard for the interests of the public treasury is not the least of their duties. The officers of a private corporation seeking its own ends, find the object of their efforts in the accumulation of business profits. . . . But the objective of business profit is in itself a restraint and a guide to their actions, and, above all, a check upon extravagant expenditures and inefficiency. The corporation created and utilized as a government agency, however, operating on a capital for which it has no accountability and which has been drawn from the public treasury with a prospect of further access to public funds in time of need, whether the need shall arise from successful expansion or wasteful expenditure, has none of these restraints; and its objective may depart ever so far from Congressional intent without a test or any standard by which its full accomplishment or failure may be measured. These concerns become primarily spending agencies. . . . They stand alone . . . without regulations or responsibility imposed by government authority."

This is rather comment than criticism. The fact is that no breath of suspicion or scandal has ever touched one of these agencies. But without this view of the character and meaning of their activities you would not understand why the capital assets of the government are so scattered and ill-accounted for, nor why the men who spent approximately eight billions of public money during the war did not *think* assets. You would not understand at all the following note at the end of the Treasury statement of government expenditures for the second fiscal year after the war.

"*Note* — Because of legislation establishing revolving funds and providing for the reimbursement of appropriations, the gross expenditures in the case of some departments and agencies, notably the War Department and the Shipping Board, have been considerably larger than above stated."

Which means, very simply, that the Treasury of the United States did not know and could not ascertain what the actual gross expenditures of the government had been for the year. Is that not an amazing fact?

LASTLY, you would not understand why an indefinite number of wooden ships are spoken of vaguely as lying in Southern ports, opening their seams to the sun and dying, while 1,003 wood-shed hatchets are in the custody of the United States Treasury, to which the General Supply Committee belongs — 1,003 hatchets, all bound around with red tape, card-indexed and historically accounted for. The hatchets were saved by red tape. The wooden ships are among the indeterminate perishing assets of the United States Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation.

Yet if we had tied red tape to our cry for "Ships! More ships at any cost!" we should not have got the ships, the largest single enterprise in the whole world would never have evolved in two years from headquarters over a men's clothing shop in F Street, Washington, D. C., and we should not now be worrying about some three and one-half billions of assets in that one independent department of the government. Therefore, let us be dispassionate in our treatment of the consequences.

We say to a member of the Shipping Board, "You have here the biggest single business on earth."

"Yes," he says. "Isn't it strange?"

"Let's take it as a business," we say. "Let's develop these elementary business facts, namely: How much capital has been put into the job? What is there to show for it? How much is it worth?"

"Those facts," he says, "ought to have been analyzed, but I really don't know how they can be got at. First, there are the ships — nineteen hundred odd, in operation and under construction." "Who can say what they are worth or what they will earn? Then there is plant and equipment. I mean the shipyards, like Hog Island."

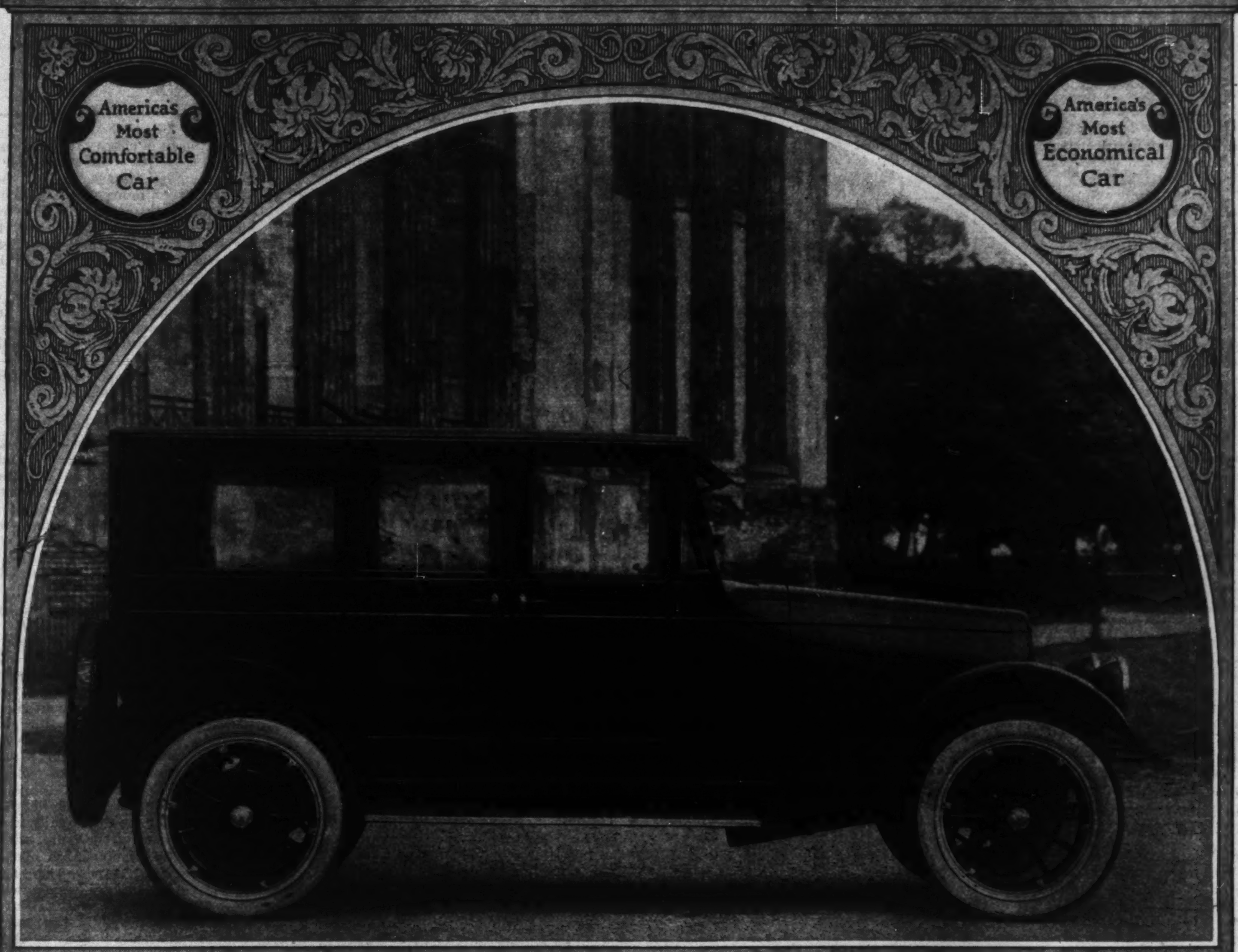
"What will be done with Hog Island?" we ask.

"Goodness knows!" he answers. "We are going to put it up for sale just to see if we can get a bid on it. Then there are the houses. We built more than eighty-six hundred houses. They are being sold as fast as possible. Then there were loans to municipalities and public service corporations for building and equipping trolley lines and other means of transportation for our employees. We hold securities for most of those loans. You must not forget the materials left on our hands when the war program stopped."

"How can one visualize those mountains of material?" we ask.

"One can't," he says, with a wide gesture. "The stuff is just piled up everywhere — hundreds of millions of dollars' worth."

Presently he turns us over to the Comptroller, who turns us over to his assistant, who turns the place upside down in quest of a certain typewritten statement which will contain exactly the information we desire. When it is produced — this [*Continued on page 54*]



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Through the Golden Chersonese to Elephant Land

[*Continued from page 23*]

workshops are open in front, so that the occupants work and eat and sleep in full view of every one who passes. The barber shaves the heads of his customers while they squat on the edge of the roadway. In the licensed gambling houses groups of excited men and women crowd about gaming-tables presided over by greasy, half-naked Chinese *croupiers*, and, when they have squandered their trifling earnings, hasten to the nearest pawnshop with any garment or article of furniture that is not absolutely indispensable to their existence in order to obtain a few more coins to hazard and eventually to lose. As a result of this passion for gambling, the city is full of pawn-shops, some streets containing scarcely anything else. At the far end of one of the bazaar streets is the largest idol manufactory in Siam, for the temples whose graceful, tapering towers dot the landscape are filled with images of Buddha, in all sizes and of all materials from wood to gold set with jewels, most of them donated by the devout in order to "make merit" for themselves. As all Buddhists wish to accumulate as much merit for themselves as possible, in order to be assured at death of a through ticket to Nirvana, the idol-making industry is in a flourishing condition.

PUSHING their way through the crowded thoroughfares, their raucous cries rising above the clamor, go the ice-cream and curry vendors, carrying the paraphernalia of their trade slung from bamboo poles borne upon the shoulders — perambulating cafeterias and soda fountains, as it were. For a *satang* — a coin equivalent to about a quarter of a cent — you can purchase a bowl of rice, which the vendor will warm for you in a pot of boiling water while you wait. As this water is drawn from the nearest canal or stagnant pool it is almost a meal in itself. The expenditure of another *satang* will provide you with an assortment of savories or relishes, made from elderly meat, decayed fish, decomposed prawns and other toothsome ingredients, which you heap upon the rice, together with a greenish-yellow curry sauce which makes the concoction look as though it were suffering from a severe attack of jaundice. These relishes are cooked, or rather rewarmed, by the simple process of suspending them in a sort of sieve in a pot of boiling water, the same pot and the same water serving for all customers alike. By this arrangement, the man who takes his snack at the close of the day has the advantage of receiving not merely what he orders, but also flavors and even floating remnants from the dishes ordered by all those who have preceded him. The ice-cream vendors drive a roaring trade in a concoction the basis of which is finely shaven ice, looking like half-frozen and very dirty slush, sweetened with sugar and flavored, according to the purchaser's taste, from an array of metal-topped bottles such as barbers use for hair oil and bay rum. But, being cold and sweet, "Isa-kee", as the vendors call it, is as popular among the lower classes in Siam as ice-cream cones are in the United States.

Though the streets of Bangkok are crowded with vehicles of every description — ramshackle and disreputable rickshaws, the worst to be found in all the East, drawn by sweating coolies; the boxes of wood and glass on wheels, called *gharries*, drawn by decrepit ponies whose harness is pieced out with rope; creaking bullock carts driven by Tamils from Southern India; bicycles, ridden by natives whose European hats and coats are in striking contrast to their bare legs and brilliant *panungs*; clanging street-cars, as crowded with humanity as those on Broadway at the rush hour; motors of every size and make, from jitneys to Rolls-Royces — the bulk of the city's traffic is borne on the great river and the countless canals which empty into it. Bangkok has been called, and not inaptly, the Venice of the East, for it is covered by a network of canals, or *klongs*, which spread out in every direction. In sampans, house-boats and other craft, moored to the banks of these canals, dwells the major portion of the city's inhabitants. The city's water population is complete in itself and perfectly independent of its neighbors on the land, for it has its own shops and dwellings, its own markets and restaurants, its own theaters and gambling establishments, its own priests and police. When you go to Bangkok I strongly advise you to hire a sampan and visit the floating portion of the city after nightfall. The house-boats are open at both ends and you will see many things that the guide books fail to mention.

The Oriental Hotel, the banks, the shipping offices, the business houses, and all the legations save only the American, are clustered on or near the river in a low-lying and unattractive quarter of the town. But follow the long, dingy, squalid highway known as the New Road, a thoroughfare lined with third-rate Chinese shops and thronged with rickshaws, carriages, bicycles, motors, street-cars, and Asiatics of every shade and costume, and you will come at length into a portion of the city as different from the mercantile district as Riverside Drive is from Bridge Street. Here you will find broad boulevards, shaded by rows of splendid tamarinds, lined by charming villas which peep coyly from the blazing gardens which surround them, and broken at frequent intervals by little parks in which are fountains and statuary. There is a great common, green with grass during the rainy season, known as the Premane Ground, where military reviews are held and where the royal cremations take place; a favorite spot in the spring for the kite-flying contests in which Siamese of all classes and all ages participate. Fronting on the Premane Ground are the not unimposing stuccoed buildings which house the Ministries of Justice, Agriculture and War. Not far away is the new Throne Hall, a huge, ornate structure of white marble, in the modern Italian style, its great dome reminiscent of the Capitol at Washington. From the center of the spacious plaza rises a rather fine equestrian statue of the late king, Chulalungkorn, and, close by, the really charming Dusit Gardens, beautifully laid out with walks and lagoons and kiosks and a great variety of tropical flowers and shrubs and trees. But, most characteristic and colorful of all, a touch of Oriental splendor, is the congeries of palaces, offices, stables, courtyards, gardens, shrines and temples, the whole encircled by a crenelated, whitewashed wall, which is the official residence of King Rama VI.

THERE are said to be nearly four hundred Buddhist temples within a two-mile radius of the royal palace of which the most interesting and magnificent by far is the famous *Wat Phra Keo*, or Temple of the Emerald Buddha, which is really a royal chapel, being within the outer circumference of the palace walls. I doubt if any space of similar size in all the world contains such a bewildering display of barbaric magnificence, such a riot of form and color, as the walled enclosure in which stand the Temple of the Emerald Buddha and its attendant structures. From the center of the marble-paved courtyard rises an enormous, cone-shaped *prachadee*, round at the bottom but tapering to a long and slender spire said to be covered with plates of gold. It certainly looks like a solid mass of that precious metal, and at daybreak and nightfall, when it catches the level rays of the sun, it can be seen from afar, shining and glittering above the gorgeously colored roofs of the temples and the many-tinted lesser spires which surround it. Close by the gilded *prachadee* is the *bote*, or chapel, used by the king, surmounted by a similar spire which is overlaid with sapphire-colored plates of glass and porcelain, while a little distance away stands the temple itself, its gilded walls set with mosaics of emerald green. Flanking the gateways of the temple courtyard are gigantic, grotesque figures, fully thirty feet in height, carved and colored like the creatures of a nightmare. They represent demons and are supposed to guard the approaches to the temple, being so placed that they glare down ferociously on all who enter the sacred enclosure. Other figures in marble, bronze, wood and stone, representing dolphins storks, cows, camels, monkeys and the various fabulous monsters of the Hindu mythology, are scattered in apparent confusion about the temple courtyard, producing an effect as fantastic as it is bewildering. Because the proportions of the buildings and the monuments are so enormous, while the enclosure in which they stand is comparatively small, I found it impossible to obtain photographs which convey an adequate conception of the extraordinary scene. It is so unreal, so incredibly bizarre, that I felt that I was looking at the *papier-mâché* setting for a motion-picture spectacle, and that the camera men would appear shortly and destroy the illusion.

The interior of the main temple is extremely lofty. The walls and rafters are of teak and the floor is covered with a matting made of silver wire. At the far end of this imposing room an enormous, pyramidal shrine of gold rises almost to the roof, its dazzling brilliancy somewhat subdued by the semi-obscurity of the interior. *Wat Phra Keo* is unique amongst Siamese temples in containing objects of real value. Everything is genuine and costly, as become the gifts of a king, though it must be admitted that certain of the royal offerings which are ranged at the foot of the shrine, such as jeweled French clocks, figurines of Sèvres and Dresden porcelain, and a large marble statue of a Roman goddess, are of doubtful appropriateness. Ranged on a table at the back of the altar are seven images of Buddha in pure gold, the right hand of each pointed upward. On the thumb and fingers of each hand glitters a king's ransom in rings of sapphires, emeralds and rubies, while from the center of each palm flashes a rosette of diamonds. High up toward the rafters, at the apex of the golden pyramid, in a sort of recess toward which the fingers of the seven images are pointing, sits an image of Buddha, perhaps twelve inches high, said to be cut from one enormous emerald — whence the temple's name. As a matter of fact, it is made of jade and is of incalculable value. Set in its forehead are three eyes, each an enormous diamond. The history of this extraordinary idol is lost in the mists of antiquity. Tradition has it that it fell from heaven into one of the Laos states, being captured by the Siamese in battle. Since then it has been repeatedly lost, captured or stolen. Its story, like that of so many famous jewels, might fittingly be written in blood.

It is the custom in Siam for every man to spend a portion of his life in a monastery. This rule applies to every one from the poorest peasant upward, the king and all the male members of the royal family having at some period worn the yellow robe of a monk. This curious custom is, no doubt, an imitation of the so-called Act of Renunciation of Gautama, the future Buddha, who, at the age of twenty-nine, moved by the sufferings of humanity, renounced his rights to his father's throne and, abandoning his wife and child, devoted the remainder of his life to religion. Just as every American boy is expected to go to school, as a matter of course, so every Siamese youth is expected to enter a monastery. The stern discipline enforced during this period accounts, I have no doubt, for the docility which is so characteristic of the Siamese. While I was in Siam I was the guest one day of the officers' mess of the crack regiment of household cavalry. Though my hosts, with few exceptions, spoke fluent English; though several of them had been educated at English schools and universities; and though the conversation over the mess table was of polo and racing and big game shooting and bridge, I learned to my astonishment that every one of these debonair young officers, with their worldly manners and their beautifully cut uniforms, had at one time shaved his head, donned the yellow robe of a monk, and begged his food from door to door. In view of the universality of the custom, it is small wonder that Siam has ten thousand monasteries and that three hundred thousand of its inhabitants wear the saffron-colored robe.

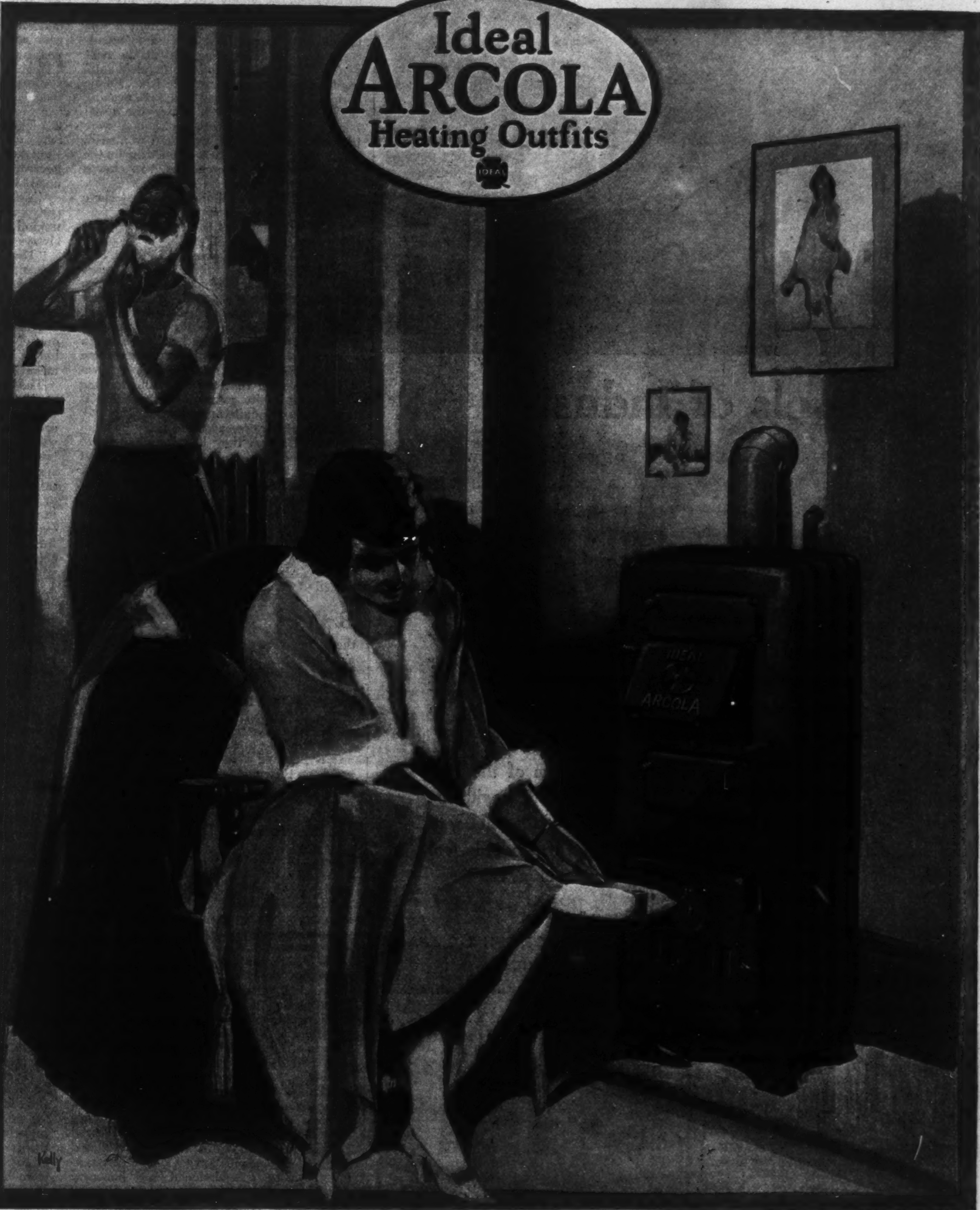
THE periods of time which men devote to the monastic life are not uniform. Some spend between a month and a year, others their entire lives. Some enter the monastery in their youth, others in middle age or when old men. But they all shave their heads and don the coarse yellow robe and otherwise lead practically the same existence. Each morning, carrying their "begging bowls", they beg their food at the doors of laymen. They come quietly and stand at the door, and, accepting the offering, as quietly depart without expressing thanks for what is given them, the idea being that they are not begging for their own benefit but in order to evoke a spirit of charity in the giver. During the dry season it is the custom for monks to make long pilgrimages for the purpose of visiting other monasteries. Each of these itinerant monks is accompanied by a youth known as a *yom*, who carries the simple requisites for the journey, the chief of which is a large umbrella. Traveling in the interior one frequently meets long files of these yellow-clad pilgrims, with their attendant *yoms*, moving in silence along a forest trail. When night comes the *yom* opens the large umbrella and thrusts its long handle into the ground, and over it he drapes a square of cloth, thus extemporizing a sort of tent under which his master sleeps.

TO VISIT Siam without seeing the royal white elephants would be like visiting Niagara without seeing the falls. The elephant stables stand in the heart of the palace enclosure, sandwiched between the palace gardens and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Each animal — there were only three in the royal stables at the time of my visit — has a separate building to itself, within which it stands on a sort of dais, one hind leg lashed with rope to a tall, stout post painted scarlet and surmounted by a gilded crown. Much as I dislike to shatter cherished illusions, were I to assert that the elephants I saw in the royal stables were white I should be convicting myself of color-blindness. The best that can be said of two of them is that they were a dirty gray, about the color of a much-used wash-rag. The third, had it been a horse, might have been described as a roan, the whole body being a pale reddish brown, with a sprinkling of real white hairs on the back. All three animals were, in reality, albinos, having the light-colored iris of the eye, the white toe-nails, and the pink skin at the end of the trunk which are the marks of the albino. As a matter of fact, "white elephant" is not a correct translation of the Siamese *chang penak*, which really means "albino elephant." But most foreigners will continue, I have no doubt, to use the term made famous by Barnum.

Though the albino elephants are never used nowadays save on occasions of great ceremony, being regarded by educated Siamese with the same amused tolerance with which an Englishman regards the great gilt coach, drawn by its eight cream-colored horses, in which the king goes to open Parliament, the ordinary elephant is of enormous economic value to the country, being a combination, as it were, of a motor-truck, a portable derrick, and a freight car. Almost anywhere in the back-country, where the only roads are trails through the jungle, one can see "elephants a-pilin' teak in the sludgy, squdgy creeks", or being loaded with merchandise for transport into the far interior. Indeed, the traveler who wishes to take a short-cut from Siam to Burmah can hire an elephant for the journey almost as readily as he can hire a motor-car in America. It is a novel means of travel, but a little of it goes a long way. A good working elephant is a valuable piece of property, being worth in the neighborhood of $2500, but the prospective purchaser should remember that the possession of one of these giant pachyderms entails considerable overhead, or rather, internal expense. DeWolfe Hopper was telling only the literal truth when he sang, in "Wang", of the tribulations of the peasant who had an elephant on his hands:

> "The elephant ate all night,
> The elephant ate all day;
> Do what he would to furnish food,
> The cry was 'Still more hay'."

Although, as I have already remarked, sophisticated Siamese regard the white elephant with amusement tinged with contempt, there is no doubt that among the bulk of the people the animals are considered sacred and are treated with great veneration. Indeed, when Siam was forced to cede certain of her eastern provinces to France, the treaty contained a clause providing that any so-called white elephants which might be captured in the ceded territory should be considered the property of the King of Siam and delivered to him forthwith. A number of years ago a traveling show known as Wilson's English Circus gave several



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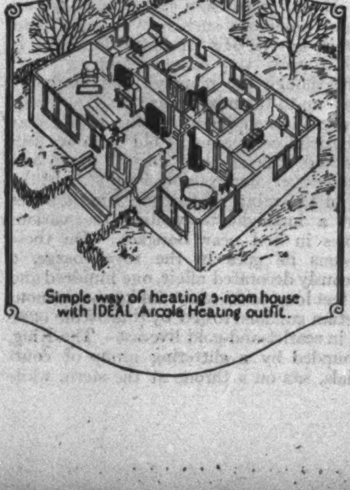

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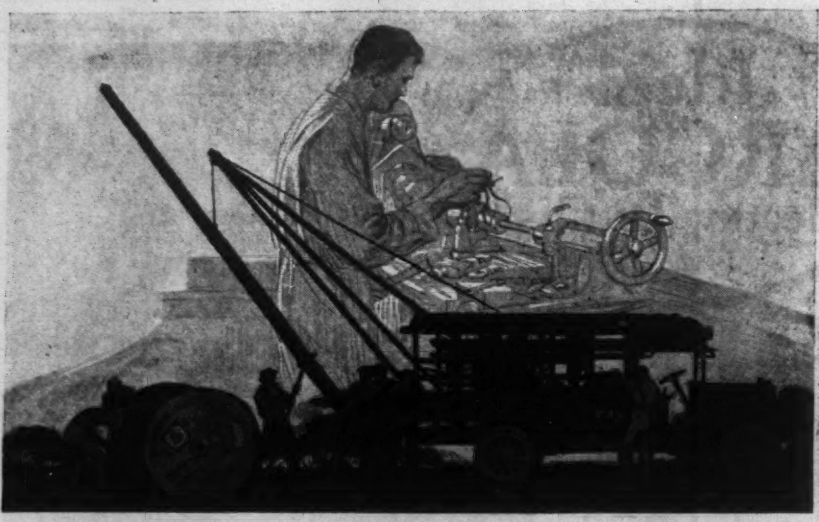

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exhibitions in Bangkok which were attended by the king, the nobility, and members of the European colony. When the proprietor saw that popular interest in his exhibition was beginning to wear off, he distributed broadcast handbills announcing that at the next performance "a genuine white elephant" would take part in the exhibition. Public curiosity was reawakened and that evening the circus was crowded. After the usual bareback riding, in which the Siamese were treated to the sight of European women in pink tights and tulle skirts pirouetting on the backs of cantering Percherons, two clowns burst into the ring.

"Hey, you!" bawled one of them. "Have you seen the white elephant?"

"Sure I have," was the response. "The King has a stable full of 'em."

"Oh, no, he ain't," shouted the first funmaker. "The King ain't got any *white* elephants. His are all chocolate-colored ones. I'll show you the only genuine white elephant in the world." Whereupon a small elephant, as snowy as repeated coats of whitewash could make it, ambled into the ring. Though a suppressed titter ran through the more sophisticated portion of the audience when it was observed that the ridiculous looking animal left white marks on everything it touched, it was quite apparent that the bulk of the spectators resented fun being made of an animal which they had been taught to consider sacred, certain of the more devout asserting that the sacrilegious performance would call down the wrath of Buddha. Their prophecies proved to be well founded, for the "white" elephant died at sea a few days later — as the result, it was hinted, of poison put in its food by the Siamese priests — and Wilson himself, who had been suffering from dysentery, died the day after he landed at Singapore.

BEING a young nation, so far as the adoption of Western methods are concerned, the Siamese are extremely sensitive, being almost pathetically eager to win the good opinion of the Occidental world. Thus, upon Siam's entry into the Great War (perhaps you were not aware that the little kingdom equipped and sent to France an expeditionary force composed of aviation, ambulance and motor units) the king abolished the white elephant on a red ground which from time immemorial had been the national standard, substituting for it a nondescript affair of colored stripes which at first glance appears to be a compromise between the flags of China and Montenegro. In doing this, I think that the king made a mistake, for he deprived his country of a distinctive emblem which was associated with the Kingdom of Siam the whole world over.

The present ruler of Siam, King Rama VI, is in most respects the very antithesis of the popular conception of an Oriental monarch. Though polygamy has been practised among the upper classes in Siam from time beyond reckoning, he has neither wife nor concubines. Instead of riding atop a white elephant, in a gilded howdah, or being borne in a palanquin, as is always the custom of the Oriental rulers of fiction, he shatters the speed laws in a big red Mercedes. For the flaming silks and flashing jewels which the movies have educated the American public to believe are habitually worn by Eastern potentates, King Rama substitutes the uniform of a Siamese general, or, for evening functions, the European court dress. He was educated at Cambridge and Oxford and later graduated from the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, being commissioned an honorary colonel in the British Army.

He is the founder and chief of an organization patterned after the Boy Scouts and known as the Wild Tigers, which has hundreds of branches and carries on its rolls the name of nearly every youth in the kingdom. Each year the organization holds in Bangkok a grand rally, when thousands of youngsters, together with many adults from all walks of life, for membership in the corps is not confined to boys, are reviewed by the sovereign, who appears as commander-in-chief of the Wild Tigers in the gorgeous and original uniform which he designed himself.

In one respect, however, King Rama lives up to the popular conception of an Oriental ruler: like his father before him, he is generous to the point of prodigality. This trait was illustrated not long ago, when he sent eight thousand pounds to the widow of Mr. Westengaard, the American, who was for many years general adviser to the Government of Siam, accompanied by a message that it was to be used for the education of her son. This recalls a characteristic little anecdote of the present ruler's father, the late King Chulalongkorn. The early youth of the late king and his brothers was spent under the tutelage of an English governess, who was affectionately addressed by the younger members of the royal family as "Mem." Upon her return to England she wrote a book entitled "An Englishwoman at the Siamese Court", in which she depicted her employer, King Mongkut, the father of Chulalongkorn, in a none too favorable light. Some years later, upon the occasion of King Chulalongkorn's visit to England, his former governess, now become an old woman, called upon him.

"Mem," he said, in the course of the conversation, "how could you write such unkind things about my father? He was always very good to you."

"That is true, Majesty," the former governess admitted in some confusion, "but the publishers wouldn't take the book unless I made it sensational. And I had to do it because I was in financial difficulties."

When she had departed the King turned to one of his equerries. "Send the poor old lady a hundred pounds," he directed. "She meant no harm and she needs the money."

The chief hobby of the present ruler is, curiously enough, amateur dramatics, of which, I was given to understand, his orthodox and conservative ministers do not wholly approve. In addition to having translated into Siamese a number of Shakespearian plays, he is the author of several original dramas, which have been produced at the palace under his personal direction and in several of which he has himself played the leading parts. As a result of this predilection for dramatics, he has accumulated an extensive theatrical wardrobe, to which he is constantly adding. When I was in Bangkok I had some clothes made by the English tailor who supplies the court — an excellent tailor, but expensive.

"You'll excuse my taking the liberty, I hope, sir," he said during the course of a fitting, "but, being as you are an American, perhaps you could assist me with some information. I've received a very pressing order for a costume such as is worn by the cowboys in your country, sir, but, though I've found some pictures in the English illustrated weeklies, I don't rightly know how to make it."

"A cowboy's costume?" I exclaimed. "In Siam? Who in the name of heaven wants it?"

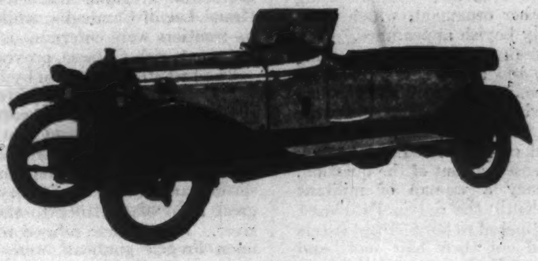
"It's for his Majesty," was the surprising answer. "He's written a play in which he takes the part of an American cowboy and he's very particular, sir, that the costume should be quite correct. Seeing as you come from that country, I thought I'd make so bold, sir, as to ask if you could give me some suggestions."

It was quite apparent that he believed that when I was at home I customarily went about in chaps, a flannel shirt and a sombrero, and, knowing the British mind, I knew that nothing was to be gained by attempting to disillusion him.

"Let's see what you've made," I demanded, whereupon he produced an outfit which appeared to be a compromise between the costume of an Italian bandit, the uniform of an Australian soldier, and the regalia of a Spanish bull-fighter. Suppressing my inclination to give way to laughter, I sketched for the grateful tailor the sort of garments to which cowpunchers — cowpunchers of the screen, at least — are addicted. If he followed my directions the King of Siam wore a costume which would have made Messrs. Will Rogers and William S. Hart green with envy.

King Rama's literary efforts have not been confined to play-writing, however, for his book on the wars of the Polish Succession is one of the standard authorities on the subject. If you go to Siam expecting to see an Oriental potentate such as you have read about in novels, His Majesty Rama VI is bound to prove very disappointing.

But, though the monarch and his court are as up-to-the-minute as the Twentieth Century Limited, many of the spectacular and colorful ceremonies of old Siam are still celebrated with all their ancient pomp and magnificence. For example, each year, at the close of the rainy season, the King devotes about a fortnight to visiting the various temples in and near Bangkok. On these occasions he goes in the royal barge, a gorgeously decorated affair, one hundred and fifty feet long, looking not unlike an enormous Venetian gondola, rowed by three-score oarsmen in scarlet-and-gold liveries. The King, surrounded by a glittering group of court officials, sits on a throne at the stern, while



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attendants hold over his head a golden umbrella. From the landing place to the temple he is borne in a sedan chair between rows of prostrate natives who bow their foreheads to the earth in adoration of this short, stout, olive-skinned, good-humored looking young man whom nearly ten millions of people implicitly believe to be the earthly representative of Buddha.

Another picturesque observance, the Rice-Planting Ceremony, takes place early in May, when the Minister of Agriculture, as the deputy of the King, leads a long procession of officials and priests to a field in the outskirts of the capital, where a pair of white bullocks, yoked to a gilded plough, are waiting. Surrounded by a throng of functionaries glittering like Christmas trees, the Minister ploughs a few furrows in the field, being followed by four young women of the court who scatter rice grains on the freshly opened soil. Until quite recent years the officials taking part in this procession claimed the privilege of appropriating any articles which caught their fancy in the shops along the route. But this quaint practise is no longer followed. It was not popular with the merchants.

The Siamese, like all Orientals, place much reliance on omens, the position of the lower hem of the *panung* worn by the Minister of Agriculture on this occasion indicating, it is confidently believed, the sort of weather to be expected during the ensuing year. If the edge of the *panung* comes down to the ankles a dry season is anticipated, even a drought, perhaps. If, on the contrary, the garment is pulled up to the knees — a raining-in-London effect, as it were — it is freely predicted that the country will suffer from floods. But if the folds of silk reach to a point midway between knee and ankle, then the farmers look forward to a moderate rainfall and a prosperous season. It is as though the United States Weather Bureau were to base its forecasts on the height at which the Secretary of Agriculture wore his trousers.

The *panung* — a strip of silk or cotton about three yards long — is the national garment of Siam, and among the poorer classes constitutes the only article of clothing. It is admirably adapted to the climate, being easy to wash and easy to put on: all that is necessary is to wind it about the waist, pass the ends between the legs, and tuck them into the girdle, thus producing the effect of a pair of knickerbockers. As both sexes wear the *panung*, and likewise wear their hair cut short, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between men and women. Siamese women keep their hair about four or five inches long and brush it straight back, like American college students, without using any comb or other ornament, which gives them a peculiarly boyish appearance. Concerning the custom of the women wearing short hair there is an interesting tradition. Once upon a time, it seems, a Siamese walled city was besieged by Cambodians while the men of the city were fighting elsewhere, and only women and children remained behind. A successful defense was out of the question. In this emergency a woman of militant character — evidently the Sylvia Pankhurst of her time — proposed to her terrified sisters that they should cut their hair short and appear upon the walls in men's clothing on the chance of frightening away the Cambodians. The ruse succeeded, for, while the invaders were hesitating whether to carry the city by storm, the Siamese warriors returned and put the enemy to flight. The Siamese prince who told me the story, an officer who had spent much of his life in Europe, remarked that he understood it had become the fashion for American women to cut their hair short also.

"True enough," I admitted. "Among our débutantes bobbed hair has become quite the vogue. But they don't cut off their hair, as your women did, in order to frighten away the men."

If you will take down the family atlas and turn to the map of Southern Asia you will see that Siam, with an area about equivalent to that of Spain, occupies the uncomfortable and precarious position of a fat walnut clinched firmly between the jaws of a nutcracker, the jaws being formed by British Burmah and French Indo-China. And for the past thirty years those jaws have been slowly closing. Until 1893, the eastern frontier of Siam was separated from the China Sea by the narrow strip of Annam, at one point barely thirty miles in width, which was under French protection. Its western boundary was the Lu Kiang River, which likewise formed the eastern boundary of the British possessions in Burmah. On the south the kingdom reached down to the Grand Lac of Cambodia, while on the north its frontiers were coterminous with those of the great, rich Chinese province of Yunnan.

The first step was taken by France in 1893, when, claiming that the Mekong — which the French were eager to acquire under the impression that it would provide them with a trade-route into Southern China — formed the true boundary between Siam and Annam, she demanded that the Siamese evacuate the great strip of territory to the east of that river. The Siamese refused to yield, whereupon French gunboats were dispatched to make a naval demonstration off Bangkok. Siam yielded and ceded to France the eastern marches of the kingdom. Meanwhile the frontier between Siam and the new British possessions in Burmah had been settled amicably in Britain's favor, Siam ceding a small strip of territory on the northwest. In 1904 the French again brought pressure to bear and obtained the Luang Prabang district lying east of the Mekong and the provinces of Malupre and Barsak. And in 1907, Siam ceded to France the provinces of Battambang, Sisophon and Siem-Reap, constituting a total of some seven thousand square miles, thus bringing within French territory the whole of the Grand Lac and the wonderful Ruins of Angkor. In 1909, England informed the Siamese Government that she was prepared to relinquish her right to maintain her own courts in Siam, the Siamese being asked in return to cede to England the states of Kelantan, Trengganu and Kedah, in the Malay Peninsula.

It was the Great War which probably saved Siam from further dismemberment. Now Siam was an ally and a friend, for in July, 1917, Siam declared war on the Central Powers, dispatched an expeditionary force to France, interned every enemy alien in the kingdom and confiscated their property, thus ridding France and England of German commercial rivalry in southeastern Asia. Moreover, she has had a national house-cleaning. Her finances are now in admirable condition; she is opening up her territory by the construction of railway lines in all directions; and she has obtained the practical abolition of French and British jurisdiction over certain of her domestic affairs, while a treaty which provides that the United States shall likewise surrender her extra territorial rights and permit her citizens to be tried in Siamese courts now awaits ratification by the Senate.

The future of Siam should be of interest to Americans if for no other reason than that it is the one remaining independent state of tropical Asia. Indeed, it is known to its own people as Muang-Thai — "the Kingdom of the Free." Whether it will remain so only the future can tell. I must admit, however, that I should be more sanguine about the continued independence of the Land of the White Elephant were it not for the colonial records of its two nearest neighbors — —

> "Because the good old rule sufficeth them, the
> simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can."

[The next of these interesting articles by E. Alexander Powell — "To Pnom-Penh by the Jungle Trail" — will appear in October McClure's]

The Salvation of George Mackintosh

Continued from page 20

and she was drawing her niblick from her bag as I passed out of sight. George's voice, blurred to a monotonous murmur, followed me until I was out of earshot.

You know those woods to the right of the third fairway. They are a nasty place in which to deposit a brand-new ball: and, though I thought that I had marked with a good deal of care the spot where mine had fallen, my researches were fruitless. I was just about to give up the hunt in despair when I heard Celia's voice calling to me from the edge of the undergrowth. There was a sharp note in it which startled me.

I came out, trailing a portion of some unknown shrub which had twined itself about my ankle.

"Yes?" I said, picking twigs out of my hair.

"I want your advice," said Celia.

"Certainly. What is the trouble? By the way," I said, looking round, "where is your fiancé?"

"I have no fiancé," she said in a dull, hard voice.

"You have broken off the engagement?"

"Not exactly. And yet . . . well, I suppose it amounts to that."

"I don't quite understand."

"Well, the fact is," said Celia in a burst of girlish frankness, "I rather think I've killed George."

"Killed him, eh?"

It was a solution that had not occurred to me, but now that it was presented for my inspection I could see its merits. In these days of national effort, when we are all working together to try to make our beloved land fit for heroes to live in, it was astonishing that nobody before had thought of a simple, obvious thing like killing George Mackintosh. George Mackintosh was undoubtedly better dead, but it had taken a woman's intuition to see it.

"I killed him with my niblick," said Celia.

I nodded. If the thing was to be done at all, it was unquestionably a niblick shot.

"I had just made my eleventh attempt to get out of that ravine," the girl went on, "with George talking all the time about the recent excavations in Egypt, when suddenly . . . you know how it is when something seems to snap. . . ."

"I had the experience with my shoe-lace only this morning."

"Yes, it was like that. Sharp — sudden — happening all in a moment. I suppose I must have said something, for George stopped talking about Egypt and said that he was reminded by a remark of the last speaker's of a certain Irishman . . ."

I pressed her hand. "Don't go on if it hurts you," I said gently.

"Well, there is very little more to tell. He bent his head to light his pipe, and well . . . the temptation was too much for me. That's all."

"You were quite right."

"You really think so?"

"I certainly do. A rather similar action, under far less provocation, once made Jael, the wife of Heber, the most popular woman in Israel."

"I wish I could think so, too," she murmured. "At the moment, you know, I was conscious of nothing but an awful elation, but — oh, he was such a darling before he got this dreadful affliction. I can't help thinking of G-george as he used to be."

She burst into a torrent of sobs.

"Would you care for me to view the remains?" I said.

"Perhaps it would be as well."

She led me silently into the ravine. George Mackintosh was lying on his back where he had fallen.

"There!" said Celia.

And, as she spoke, George Mackintosh gave a kind of snorting groan and sat up. Celia uttered a sharp shriek and sank on her knees beside him. George blinked once or twice and looked about him dazedly.

"Save the women and children!" he cried. "I can swim!"

"Oh, George!" said Celia.

"Feeling a little better?" I asked.

"A little. How many people were hurt?"

"Hurt?"

"When the express ran into us." He cast another glance around him. "Why, how did I get here?"

"You were here all the time," I said.

"Do you mean after the roof fell in or before?"

Celia was crying quietly down the back of his neck. "Oh, George!" she said again.

He groped out feebly for her hand and patted it.

"Brave little woman!" he said. "Brave little woman! She stuck by me all through. Tell me — I am strong enough to bear it — what caused the explosion?"

It seemed to me a case where much unpleasant explanation might be avoided by the exercise of a little tact.

"Well, some say one thing and some another," I said. "Whether it was a spark from a cigarette . . ."

Celia interrupted me. The woman in her made her revolt against this well-intentioned subterfuge.

"I hit you, George!"

"Hit me?" he repeated curiously. "What with? The Singer Building?"

"With my niblick."

"You hit me with your niblick! But why?"

She hesitated; then she faced him bravely. "Because you wouldn't stop talking."

He gaped.

"Me!" he said. "*I* wouldn't stop talking! But I hardly talk at all. I'm noted for it."

Celia's eyes met mine in agonized inquiry. But I saw what had happened. The blow, the sudden shock, had operated on George's brain-cells in such a way as to effect a complete cure. I have not the technical knowledge to be able to explain it, but the facts were plain.

"Lately, my dear fellow," I assured him, "you have dropped into the habit of talking rather a good deal. Ever since we started out this afternoon you have kept up an incessant flow of conversation."

"Me! On the links! It isn't possible."

"It is only too true, I fear. And that is why this brave girl hit you with her niblick. You started to tell her a funny story just as she was making her eleventh shot to get her ball out of the rough, and she took what she considered the necessary steps."

"Can you ever forgive me, George?" cried Celia.

George Mackintosh stared at me. Then a crimson blush mantled his face.

"So I did! It's all beginning to come back to me. Oh, heavens!"

"*Can* you forgive me, George?" cried Celia again.

He took her hand in his.

"Forgive you?" he muttered. "Can *you* forgive *me*? Me — a tee-talker, a green-gabbler, a prattler on the links, the lowest form of life known to science! I am unclean, unclean!"

"It's only a little mud, dearest," said Celia, looking at the sleeve of his coat. "It will brush off when it's dry."

"How can you link your lot with a man who talks when people are making their shots?"

"You will never do it again."

"But I have done it. And you stuck to me all through! Oh, Celia!"

"I loved you, George."

The man seemed to swell with a sudden emotion. His eyes lit up, and he thrust one hand into the breast of his coat while he raised the other in a sweeping gesture. For an instant he appeared on the verge of a flood of eloquence. Then, as if he had been made sharply aware of what it was that he intended to do, he suddenly sagged. The gleam died out of his eyes. He lowered his hand.

"Well, I must say that was rather decent of you," he said. A lame speech, but one that brought an infinite joy to both his hearers. For it showed that George Mackintosh was cured beyond possibility of relapse. George Mackintosh was himself again.

"Yes, I must say you are rather a corker," he added.

"George!" cried Celia.

I said nothing, but I clasped his hand: and then, taking my clubs, I turned in the direction of the club-house. When I looked round, she was still in his arms. I left them there, alone together in the great silence.

And so (concluded the Oldest Member) you see that a cure is possible, though it needs a woman's gentle hand to bring it about. And how few women are capable of doing what Celia Tennant did. Apart from the difficulty of summoning up the necessary resolution, an act like hers requires a straight eye and a pair of strong and supple wrists. It seems to me that for the ordinary talking golfer there is no hope. And the race seems to be getting more numerous every day. Yet the finest golfers are always the least loquacious. It is related of the illustrious Sandy McHoots that when, on the occasion of his winning the British Open Championship, he was interviewed by reporters from the leading daily papers as to his views on Tariff Reform, Bimetalism, the Trial by Jury System, and the Modern Craze for Dancing, all they could extract from him was the single word "Mphm"! Having uttered which, he shouldered his bag and went home to tea. A great man. I wish there were more like him.

The Breaking Point

[*Continued from page 16*]

"Don't you think we'd better have a talk?"

"What about?" she asked, with her heart hammering.

"About me." He stood above her, and looked down, still with the tenderness with which he always regarded her, but with resolution in his very attitude. "First of all, I'll tell you something. Then I'll ask you to tell me all you can."

She yearned over him as he told her, for all her terror. His voice, for all its steadiness, was strained.

"I have felt for some time," he finished, "that you and David were keeping something from me. I think, now, that this is what it was. Of course, you realize that I shall have to know."

"Dick! Dick!" was all she could say.

"I was about," he went on, with his almost terrible steadiness, "to ask a girl to take my name. I want to know if I have a name to offer her. I have, you see, only two alternatives to believe about myself. Either I am Henry Livingstone's illegitimate son, and in that case I have no right to my name, or to offer it to any one, or I am"—he made a despairing gesture—"or I am some one else, some one who was smuggled out of the mountains and given an identity that makes me a living lie."

ALWAYS she had known that this might come sometime, but always, too, she had seen David bearing the brunt of it. He could bear it. It was not of her doing or of her approving. For years the danger of discovery had hung over her like a cloud.

"Do you know which?" he persisted.

"Yes, Dick."

"Would you have the unbelievable cruelty not to tell me?"

She got up, a taut little figure with a dignity born of her fear and her love for him.

"I shall not betray David's confidence," she said. "Long ago I warned him that this time would come. I was never in favor of keeping you in ignorance. But it is David's problem, and I cannot take the responsibility of telling you."

He knew her determination, and her obstinate loyalty. But he was fairly desperate.

"You know that if you don't tell me, I shall go to David."

"If you go now you will kill him."

"It's as bad as that, is it?" he asked grimly. "Then there is something shameful behind it, is there?"

"No, no, Dick. Not that. And I want you always to remember this: What David did was out of love for you. He has made many sacrifices for you. First he saved your life, and then he made you what you are. And he has had a great pride in it. Don't destroy his work of years."

Her voice broke and she turned to go out, her chin quivering, but half-way to the door he called to her.

"Aunt Lucy," he said gently.

She heard him behind her, felt his strong arms as he turned her about. He drew her to him and, stooping, kissed her cheek.

"You're right," he said. "Always right. I'll not worry him with it. My word of honor. When the time comes he'll tell me, and until it comes, I'll wait. And I love you both. Don't ever forget that."

He kissed her again and let her go.

But long after David had put his prayer-book away that night, and after the nurse had rustled down the stairs to the night supper on the dining-room table, Lucy lay awake and listened to Dick's slow pacing of his bedroom floor.

He was very gentle with David from that time on, and tried to return to his old light-hearted ways. On the day David was to have his first broiled sweetbread he caught the nurse outside, borrowed her cap and apron and carried in the tray himself.

"I hope your food is to your taste, Doctor David," he said, in a high falsetto which set the nurse giggling in the hall. "I may not be much of a nurse, but I *can* cook."

Even Lucy was deceived at times. He went his customary round, sent out the monthly bills, opened and answered David's mail, bore the double burden of David's work and his own ungrudgingly, but off guard he was grave and abstracted. He began to look very thin, too, and Lucy often heard him pacing the floor at night. She thought that he seldom, or never, went to Wheelers'.

And so passed the tenth day of David's illness, with the smile on Elizabeth's face growing a trifle fixed as three days went by without the shabby car rattling to the door; with "The Valley" playing its second and final week before going to New York; and with Leslie Ward unconsciously taking up the shuttle Clare had dropped, and carrying the pattern one degree further toward completion.

Just how Leslie Ward had drifted into his innocuous affair with the star of "The Valley" he was not certain himself. Innocuous it certainly was. Afterward, looking back, he was to wonder sometimes if it had not been precisely for the purpose it served. But that was long months after. Not until the pattern was completed was he to recognize his own work in it.

The truth was that he was not too happy at home. Nina's smart little house on the Ridgely Road had at first kept her busy. She had spent unlimited time with decorators, had studied and rejected innumerable water-color sketches of interiors, had haunted auction rooms and bid recklessly on things she felt at the moment she could not do without, later on to have to wheedle Leslie into straightening her bank balance. Thought, too, and considerable energy had gone into training and outfitting her servants, and still more into inducing them to wear the expensive uniforms she provided.

But what she made, so successfully, was a house rather than a home. There were times, indeed, when Leslie began to feel that it was not even a house, but a small hotel. They almost never dined alone, and when they did Nina would explain that everybody was tied up. Then, when dinner was over, restlessness would seize her, and she would want to run in to the theater, or make a call. If he refused, she nursed a grievance all evening.

And he did not like her friends. It came to the place where, when he knew one of the gay evenings was on, he would stay in town, playing billiards at his club, or occasionally wander into a theater, where he stood or sat at the back of the house and watched the play with cynical, rather unhappy eyes.

Then came Gregory, and the introduction to Beverly Carlysle, and a life that was new to him. Perhaps the very novelty was what first attracted him, the oddity of feeling that he was on terms of friendship, for it amounted to that with surprising quickness, with a famous woman, whose face smiled out at him from his morning paper or, huge and shockingly colored, from the billboards.

He formed the habit of calling on her in the afternoons at her hotel, and he saw that she liked it. It was often lonely, she explained. He sent her flowers and cigarettes and he found her poised and restful, and sometimes, when she was off guard, with the lines of old suffering in her face.

She sat still. She didn't fidget, as Nina did. She listened, too. She was not as beautiful as she seemed on the stage, but she was very good to look at, and he knew from the first that she placed no undue emphasis on his visits. In her world men came and went, brought or sent small tribute, and she was pleased and grateful. No more. The next week, or the week after, and other men in other places would be doing the same thing.

BUT he wondered about her, sometimes. Did she ever think of Judson Clark and the wreck he had made of her life? What of resentment and hatred lay behind her quiet face, or the voice with its careful intonations, which was so unlike Nina's?

Now and then he saw her brother. He neither liked nor disliked Gregory. He knew that he had been opposed to their playing the second week there, and that a small flutter of agitation, for some reason, always followed his entrance. More than once he had felt distinctly in the way, and had finally been driven away by that conviction.

Then, one day, he happened on something that puzzled him. He said to Gregory:

"By the way, I saw you in Haverly yesterday afternoon."

"Must have seen somebody else. Haverly? Where's Haverly?"

Leslie Ward had been almost astounded.

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There had been no mistake about the recognition. But he passed it off with that curious sense of sex loyalty that will actuate a man even toward his enemies.

“Funny,” he said. “Chap looked like you. Maybe a little heavier.”

Nevertheless, he had a conviction that he had said something better left unsaid, and that Beverly Carlysle's glance at her brother was almost hostile. He had that instantaneous picture of the two of them, the man defiant and somehow frightened, and the woman's eyes anxious and yet slightly contemptuous. Then, in a flash, it was gone.

He had meant to go home that evening, would have, probably, for he was not ignorant of where he was drifting; but when he went back to the office Nina was on the wire with the news that they were to go with a party to a country inn.

“For chicken and waffles, Les,” she said. “It will be oceans of fun. And I've promised the cocktails.”

“I'm tired,” he replied, sulkily. “And why don't you let some of the other fellows come over with the drinks? It seems to me I'm always the goat.”

“Oh, if that's the way you feel!” Nina said, and hung up the receiver.

“You'll have to be a *man*, Blackburn, and if you stay white to the day you die, you won't have paid off one billionth of what you owe!” Read

The First Ace

***by* Holworthy Hall**

and see how Blackburn paid

In October McClure's 15 Cents

He did not go home. He went to the theater and stood at the back, with his sense of guilt deadened by the knowledge that Nina was having what she would call a heavenly time. After all, it would soon be over. He counted the days. “The Valley” had only four more before it moved on.

He had already played his small part in the drama that involved Dick Livingstone, but he was unaware of it. He went home that night, to find Nina already in bed and very sulky, and went to bed himself in no pleasant frame of mind. But he took a firmer hold of himself that night before he slept. He didn't want a smash, and yet they might be headed that way. He wouldn't see Beverly Carlysle again.

He lived up to his resolve the next day, bought his flowers as usual, but this time for Nina, and took them with him.

But Nina was not at home. The butler reported that she was dining at the Wheelers' and he thought the man eyed him with restrained commiseration.

“Did she say I am expected there?” he asked.

“She ordered dinner for you here, sir.”

Even for Nina that sounded odd. He took his coat and went out again to the car; after a moment's hesitation he went back and got the orchids.

Dick Livingstone's machine was at the curb before the Wheeler house, and in the living-room he found Walter Wheeler, pacing the floor. Mr. Wheeler glanced at him and looked away.

“Anybody sick?” Leslie asked, his feeling of apprehension growing.

“NINA is having hysterics up-stairs,” Mr. Wheeler said, gravely, and continued his restless pacing.

“Nina! Hysterics?”

“That's what I said,” replied Mr. Wheeler savagely. “Between you, you've made a nice mess of things, haven't you?”

Leslie placed the box of orchids on the table and drew off his gloves. His mind was running over many possibilities.

“You'd better tell me about it, hadn't you?”

“Oh, I will. Don't worry. I've seen this coming for months. I'm not taking her part. God knows I know her, and she has as much idea of making a home as — as —” he looked about —“as that poker has. But that's the worst you can say of her. As to you — —”

“Well?”

Mr. Wheeler's anxiety was greater than his anger. He lowered his voice.

“She got a bill to-day for two or three boxes of flowers sent to some actress.” And when Leslie said nothing, “I'm not condoning it, mind you. You'd no business to do it. But,” he added fretfully, “why the devil, if you've got to act the fool, don't you have your bills sent to your office?”

“I suppose I don't need to tell you that's all there was to it. Flowers, I mean.”

“I'm taking that for granted. But she says she won't go back.”

Leslie was aghast and frightened, not at the threat; she would go back, of course. But she would always hold it against him. She cherished small grudges faithfully. And he knew she would never understand, never see her own contribution to his mild defection nor comprehend the actual innocence of those afternoons of tea and talk.

There was no sound from up-stairs. Mr. Wheeler got his hat and went out, leaving him alone. Jim came in whistling, looked in and said: “Hello, Les,” and disappeared. He sat in the growing twilight, and cursed himself for a fool. After all, where had he been heading? A man couldn't eat his cake and have it. But he was resentful, too; he stressed rather hard his own innocence, and chose to ignore the less innocent impulses that lay behind it.

After a half-hour or so he heard some one descending and Dick Livingstone appeared in the hall. He called to him, and Dick entered the room. Before he sat down he lighted a cigarette and in the flare of the match Leslie got an impression of fatigue and of something new, of trouble. But his own anxieties obsessed him.

“She told you about it, of course?”

“Yes.”

“I was a fool, of course. But it was only a matter of a few flowers and some afternoon calls. She's a fine woman, Livingstone, and she is lonely. The women have given her a pretty cold deal since the Clark story, I fancy. They copy her clothes and her walk, but they don't ask her into their homes.”

“Isn't the trouble more fundamental than that, Ward? I was thinking about it upstairs. Nina was pretty frank. She says you've had your good time, and want to settle down, and that she is young, and now is her only chance. Later on there may be children, you know. She blames herself, too, but she has a fairly clear idea of how it happened.”

“Do you think she'll go back home?”

“She promised she would.”

They sat smoking in silence. In the dining-room Annie was laying the table for dinner and a most untragic odor of new garden peas began to steal along the hall. Dick suddenly stirred and threw away his cigarette.

“I was going to talk to you about something else,” he said, “but this is hardly the time. I'll get on home.” He rose. “She'll be all right. Only I'd advise very tactful handling and — the fullest explanation you can make.”

“What is it? I'd be glad to have something to keep my mind occupied. It's eating itself up just now.”

“It's a personal matter.”

Ward glanced up at him quickly.

“Yes?”

“Have you happened to hear a story that I believe is going round? One that concerns me?”

“Well, I have,” Leslie admitted. “I didn't pay much attention. Nobody is taking it very seriously.”

“That's not the point,” Dick persisted. “I don't mind idle gossip. I don't give a damn about it. It's the statement itself.”

“I should say you are the only person who knows anything about it.”

Dick made a restless, impatient gesture.

“I want to know one thing more,” he said. “Nina told you, I suppose. Does — I suppose Elizabeth knows it, too?”

“Yes. She knows it.”

Dick turned abruptly and went out of the room, and a moment later Leslie heard the front door slam.

Elizabeth, standing at the head of the stairs, heard it also, and turned away, with a new droop to her usually valiant shoulders. Her world, too, had gone awry, that safe world of protection and cheer and kindliness. First had come Nina, white-lipped and shaken, and Elizabeth had had to face the fact that there was such a thing as treachery and queer hidden things that men did, and that came to light and brought horrible suffering.

And then, although at first she refused to believe it, there was something wrong with Dick. No. Between Dick and herself. Something that made his voice formal and rather hoarse, and separated them by miles even when they stood side by side. She was frightfully hurt, and inclined to search back to their last meeting for something she had said or done.

She tried very hard to feel comforted when Nina and Leslie were reconciled. For reconciled they were. Not immediately, not until late in the evening, indeed. There had been rather a bad time, for Nina had refused to see Leslie at all, and had preserved a stony silence when he insisted on entering her room. Then for an hour there had been only mostly Leslie's deep masculine tones, and an occasional sharp interjection from Nina, followed at last by sobbing that penetrated through the closet door, and made it necessary for Elizabeth to restrain her mother almost by force from going in.

But soon after that Leslie had gone down-stairs, and they heard him in the pantry and kitchen, moving about and whistling softly. The servants had gone, and the air was filled with the odor of burning bread. Some time later Mrs. Wheeler, waiting uneasily in the upper hall, beheld her son-in-law coming up and carrying proudly a tray on which was toast of an incredible blackness and a pot which smelled feebly of tea.

“The next time you're out of a cook just send for me,” he said cheerfully.

Mrs. Wheeler, full and overflowing with indignation and the piece of her mind she had meant to deliver, retired, vanquished, to her bedroom.

Late that night when Nina had finally forgiven him and had settled down for sleep, Leslie went down-stairs for a cigar, to find Elizabeth sitting there alone, a book on her knee, and her face wistful.

“Sitting and thinking, or just sitting?” he inquired.

“I was thinking.”

“Air-castles, eh? Well, be sure you put the right man into them!” He felt more or less a fool for having said that, for it was extremely likely that Nina's family was feeling some doubt about Nina's choice.

“What I mean is,” he added hastily, “don't be a fool and take Wallie Sayre. Take a *man*, while you're about it.”

“I would, if I could do the taking.”

“That's piffle, Elizabeth.” He sat down on the arm of a chair and looked at her. “Look here, what about this story the Rossiter girl and a few others are handing round about Dick Livingstone? You're not worrying about it, are you?”

“I don't believe it's true, and it wouldn't matter to me, anyhow.”

“Good for you,” he said heartily, and got up. “You'd better go to bed, young lady. It's almost midnight.”

But although she rose she made no further move to go.

“What I am worrying about is this, Leslie. He may hear it.”

“He has heard it, honey.”

HE had expected her to look alarmed, but instead she showed relief.

“I'll tell you the truth, Les,” she said. “I *was* worrying. I — I'm terribly fond of him. It just came all at once, and I couldn't help it. And I thought he liked me, too, that way.” She stopped and looked up at him to see if he understood, and he nodded gravely. “Then to-day, when he came to see Nina, he avoided me. He — I was waiting in the hall upstairs, and he just said a word or two and went on down.”

“Poor devil!” Leslie said. “You see, he's in an unpleasant position, to say the least. But here's a thought to go to sleep on. If you ask me, he's keeping out of your way, not because he cares too little, but because he cares too much.”

Long after a repentant and chastened Leslie had gone to sleep, his arm over Nina's unconscious shoulder, Elizabeth stood wide-eyed on the tiny balcony outside her room. From it in daylight she could see the Livingstone house. Now it was invisible, but an upper window was outlined in the light. Very shyly she kissed her finger-tips to it.

“Good-night, dear,” she whispered.

Louis Bassett had left for Norada the day after David's sudden illness, but ten days later found him only as far as Chicago, and laid up in his hotel with a sprained ankle. It was not until the day Nina went back to the little house in the Ridgely Road, having learned the first lesson of married life, that men must not only be captured but also held, that he found himself able to resume his journey.

He had chafed wretchedly under the delay. It was true that nothing in the way of a story had broken yet. The *Tribune* had carried a photograph of the cabin where Clark had, according to the Donaldson woman, spent the winter following the murder, and there were the usual reports that he had been seen recently in spots as diverse as Seattle and New Orleans. But when the following Sunday brought nothing further, he surmised that the pack, having lost the scent, had been called off.

HE confirmed this before starting west by visiting some of the offices of the leading papers and looking up old friends. The Clark story was dead for the time. They had run a lot of pictures of him, however, and some one might turn him up eventually, but a scent was pretty cold in ten years. The place had changed, too. Oil had been discovered five years ago, and the old settlers had, a good many of them, cashed in and moved away. The town had grown like all oil towns.

Bassett was fairly content. He took the night train out of Chicago, and spent the next day crossing Nebraska, fertile, rich, and interesting. On the afternoon of the second day he left the train and took a branch line toward the mountains and Norada, and from that time on he became an urbane, interested, and, generally, cigar-smoking interrogation point.

“Railroad been here long?” he asked the conductor.

“Four years.”

“Norada must have been pretty isolated before that.”

“Thirty miles in a coach or a Ford car.”

“I was reading the other day,” said Bassett, “about the Judson Clark case. Have a cigar? Got time to sit down?”

“You a newspaper man?”

“Oil-well supplies,” said Bassett glibly. “Well, in this article it seemed some woman or other had made a confession. It sounded fishy to me.”

“Well, I'll tell you about that.” The conductor sat down and bit the end off his cigar. “I knew the Donaldsons well, and Maggie Donaldson was an honest woman. But I tell you how I explain the thing. Donaldson died, and that left her pretty much alone. The executors of the Clark estate kept her on the ranch, but when the estate was settled three years ago she had to move. That broke her all up. She's always said he wasn't dead. She kept the house just as it was, and my wife says she had his clothes all ready and everything.”

“That rather sounds as though the story is true, doesn't it?”

“Not necessarily. It's my idea she got from hoping to moping, so to speak. She went into town regular for letters for ten years, and the postmaster says she never got any. She was hurt in front of the post-office. The talk around here is that she's been off her head for the last year or two,” he volunteered.

“But they found the cabin.”

“Sure they did,” said the conductor equably. “We all knew it was there. It was an old fire station before they put the new one on Goat Mountain. I spent a month in it myself, once, with a dude who wanted to take pictures of bear. We found a bear, but he charged the camera, and I'd be running yet if I hadn't come to civilization.”

When he had gone Bassett fell into deep thought. So Maggie Donaldson had gone to the post-office for ten years. He tried to visualize those faithful, wearisome journeys through spring mud and winter snow, always futile and always hopeful. He did not for a moment believe that she had “gone off her head.” She had been faithful to the end, as some women were, and in the end, too, as had others, she had died of her faith.

And again he wondered at the curious ability of some men to secure loyalty. They might go through life, tearing down ideas and destroying illusions, only to find that some faithful hand had rebuilt them for itself.

He was somewhat daunted at the size and bustling activity of Norada. Its streets were paved and well lighted, there was a park and a public library, and the clerk at the Commercial Hotel asked him if he wished a private bath! In one way it helped him, however. In the old Norada a newcomer might have been subject to a friendly but inquisitive interest. In this grown-up and self-centered community a man might come and go unnoticed.

However, he found a real difficulty at the start. The pack, as he cynically thought of them, would have started at the Clark ranch and the cabin. He would get to them, of course, but he meant to start on the outside of the circle and work in.

"Been here long?" he asked the clerk at the desk, after a leisurely meal.

The clerk grinned.

"I came here two years ago. I never saw Jud Clark. To get to the Clark place take the north road out of the town and keep straight about eight miles. The road's good now. You fellows have worn it smooth."

"Must have written that down and learned it off," Bassett said admiringly. "What the devil's the Clark place? And why should I go there? Unless," he added, "they serve a decent meal."

"Sorry." The clerk looked at him sharply, was satisfied, and picked up a pen. "You'll hear the story if you stay around here any time. Anything I can do for you?"

But if the clerk had been there only two years he was not useful.

"Yes. Fire the cook," Bassett said, and moved away.

The next day, however, he had a bit of luck. His elderly chambermaid had lived in the mountains behind the town for years.

"Ever hear of any Livingstones in these parts?" he asked.

She glanced at him. "Why, yes. There used to be a Livingstone ranch at Dry River," she said, pausing with her carpet-sweeper. "I only know the name. It wasn't much of a place, I think. Although you can't tell these days. I sold sixty acres eight years ago for two thousand dollars, and the folks that bought it are getting a thousand a day out of it."

She sighed. She had touched the hem of fortune's garment and passed on; for some opportunity knocked but faintly, and for others it burst open the door and forced its way in.

"I'd be a millionaire now if I'd held on," she said somberly.

That day Bassett engaged a car by the day, he to drive it himself and return it in good condition, the garage to furnish tires.

"I'd just like to say one thing," the owner said, as he tried the gears. "I don't know where you're going, and it's not exactly my business. Here in the oil country, where they're cutting each other's throats for new leases, we let a man alone. But if you've any idea of taking that car by the back road to the old fire station where Jud Clark's supposed to have spent the winter, I'll just say this: we've had two stuck up there for a week, and the only way I see to get them back is a cyclone."

"I'm going to Dry River," Bassett said shortly.

"Dry River's right, if you're looking for oil. Go easy on the brakes, old man. We need 'em in our business."

DRY RIVER was a small settlement away from the railroad. It consisted of two intersecting unpaved streets, a dozen or so houses, a closed and empty saloon and two general stores. He chose one at random and found that the old Livingstone place had been sold ten years ago, on the death of its owner, Henry Livingstone.

"His brother from the East inherited," said the storekeeper. "He came and sold out, lock, stock, and barrel. Not that there was much. A few cattle and horses, and the stuff in the ranch house, which wasn't valuable. There were a lot of books and the brother gave them for a library, but we haven't any building. The railroad isn't built this far yet, and unless we get oil here it won't be."

"The brother inherited, eh? Do you know the brother's name?"

"David, I think. He was a doctor back East somewhere."

"Then this Henry Livingstone wasn't married? Or at least had no children?"

"He wasn't married. He was a sort of hermit. He'd been dead two days before any one knew it. My wife went out when they found him and got him ready for the funeral. He was buried before the brother got here." He glanced at Bassett shrewdly. "The place has been prospected for oil, and there's a dry hole on the next ranch. I tell my wife nature's like the railroad. It quit before it got this far."

Bassett's last scruple had fled. The story was there, ready for the gathering. So ready, indeed, that he was almost suspicious of his luck.

And that conviction, that things were coming too easy, persisted through his interview with the storekeeper's wife, in the small house behind the store. She was a talkative woman, eager to discuss the one drama in a drab life, and she showed no curiosity as to the reason for his question.

"Henry Livingstone!" she said. "Well, I should say so. I went out right away when we got the word he was dead, and there I stayed until it was all over. I guess I know as much about him as any one around here does, for I had to go over his papers to find out who his people were."

THE papers, it seemed, had not been very interesting, canceled checks and receipted bills, and a large bundle of letters, all of them from a brother named David and a sister who signed herself Lucy. There had been a sealed one, too, addressed to David Livingstone, and to be opened after his death. She had had her husband telegraph to "David" and he had come out, too late for the funeral.

"Do you happen to remember when that was?"

"Let me see. Henry Livingstone died about a month before the murder at the Clark ranch. We date most things around here from that time."

"How long did 'David' stay?" Bassett had tried to keep his tone carefully conversational, but he saw that it was not necessary. She was glad of a chance to talk.

"Well, I'd say about three or four weeks. He hadn't seen his brother for years, and I guess there was no love lost. He sold everything as quick as he could, and went back east." She paused and glanced at the clock. "The mister will be in soon for dinner. I'd be glad to have you stay and have a meal with us."

The reporter thanked her and declined.

"It's an interesting story," he said. "I didn't tell your husband, for I wasn't sure I was on the right trail. But the David and Lucy business eliminates this man. There's a piece of property waiting in the east for a Henry Livingstone who came to this state in the '80's, or for his heirs. You can say positively that this Henry Livingstone was not married?"

"No. He didn't like women. Never had one on the place. Two ranch hands that are still at the Wassons', and himself, that was all. The Wassons are the folks who bought the ranch."

No housekeeper, then, and no son born out of wedlock, so far as any evidence went. All that glib lying in the doctor's office, all that apparent openness and frankness, gone by the board. The man in the cabin, reported by Maggie Donaldson, had been David Livingstone. Somehow, some way, he had got Judson Clark out of the country and spirited him east. Not that that mattered just yet. The essential fact was there, that David Livingstone had been in this part of the country at the time Maggie Donaldson had been nursing Judson Clark in the mountains.

There was to be no gap, then, no ten years to fill in. It all fitted together so closely that a knife blade could not find the joint, even to David's inheriting the ranch and Henry Livingstone's lack of living issue.

He prepared to go.

"You say this David went east, when he had sold out the place. Do you remember where he lived?"

"Some town in eastern Pennsylvania. I've forgotten the name."

"I've got to be sure I'm wrong, and then go ahead," he said, as he got his hat. "I'll see those men at the ranch, I guess, and then be on my way. How far is it?"

It was about ten miles, along a bad road, which kept him too much occupied for any connected thought. But his sense of exultation persisted. He had found Judson Clark.

[The next instalment of "The Breaking Point" will appear in October McClure's]

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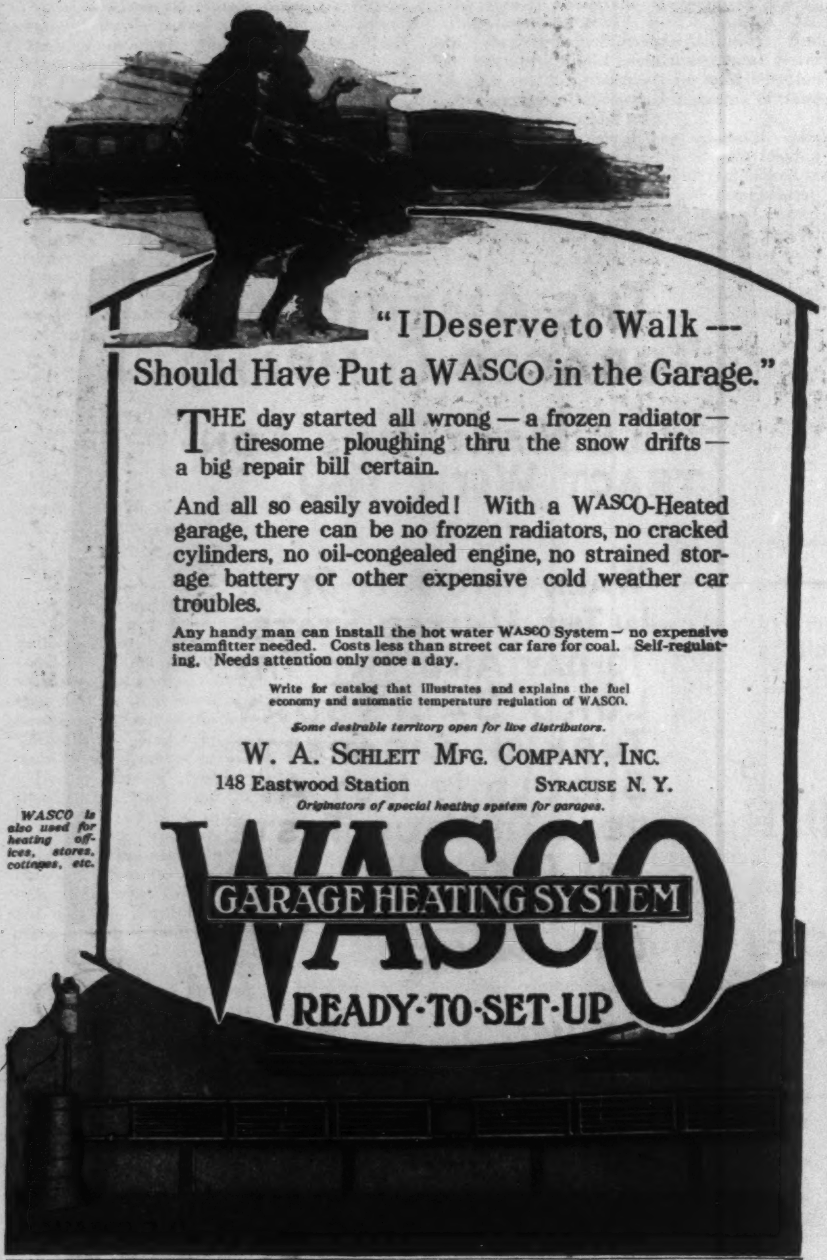

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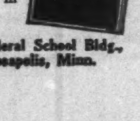

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The Wasted Generation

[*Continued from page 32*]

We came back shoulder to shoulder. It is strange how little we can say to each other. I have not the slightest inkling of the ways of his mind. Sometimes I think him totally devoid of imagination. Perhaps I am wrong and in his inner shell his thoughts are active and relentless. His code is a strange one, very Anglo-Saxon, and I think he is still ashamed that once or twice I saw him in the raw. I, of course, never refer to Letty, though her presence is always between us. The nearest approach to intimacy is a dialogue like this:

"How are you to-day, Ben?"

"First rate."

"Nothing worrying you?"

"Nothing."

"You look more like your old self."

"Feel so."

"All right then, old fellow?"

"Quite."

And we are two human beings, brothers even — living from day to day, and indifferent to the fates!

WHETHER the passion in him that Letty had fired has died out or is only smoldering, I have no way of knowing. I am inclined to think it is his pride that suffers most. I do not think there is any black resolve back of his mind. His imagination is not apt to run away with him. . . . But, having written this, I wonder. . . . His is a nature utterly incomprehensible to me, and daily contact seems to send him farther away. I am living with a stranger.

This afternoon we saw Alan. I had sent him word of our arrival at Bordeaux, before I knew I would have the opportunity to see him. As a matter of fact, I was apprehensive of what might happen, for both Alan and Ben were strong-willed and direct to the point. But to my surprise the meeting passed off without incident. He sat down as though twenty years had not passed and the leader was not Alan or myself, but Ben. We both felt it. From the moment he walked into the room, he was the older brother and with us tradition still held.

It was a curious phenomenon — yet one that I have noticed before, on meeting again some hero of school days — an idolatry does abide that nothing in the passage of human life can destroy. It is probably this reason — the instinct to continue a mastership once acknowledged, that drives certain strong growing natures away from the dwarfing influences of the family.

Alan was alone when we entered, though Toinon came in shortly afterward.

"Well, Skipper. Pretty banged up, aren't you?"

Ben had come in with outstretched hand, as though there had never been a cloud between them, and Alan, who had hung back at my first approach, found himself shaking hands, yielding to Ben, allowing himself to be ordered around by the man against whom he had undoubtedly been steeling his heart.

"Well, how are you? You look pretty much slapped around but a damned sight better than I expected."

"Yes. Much better."

"Amazingly so, old fellow. You'll be out having a fling at the Boche before you know it."

And he did look better, though how much may have been the excitement of seeing us is a thing I don't know.

"Here. Stretch out in this chair. If there's any hustling to do, we'll do it. Coddle yourself there. Davy and I can find the tobacco. Nice diggings you have here."

At this moment Toinon came in, her market-basket on her arm, and stopped short at sight of us.

"What shall I call her? Davy has told me about her," said Ben, rising.

"Toinon — Mlle. Toinon, if you like. *Toinon, m'amie, c'est mon frère Ben. Tu connais David. Viens ici.*"

She shook hands gaily, and passing to Alan leaned over and kissed him, while Alan looked at us with a certain defiance.

"Don't carry a chip on your shoulder, Skipper," said Ben, knocking out the ashes from his pipe, while Toinon disappeared with her marketing.

"And if I married her?" said Alan.

"Why? If you're happy," said Ben, shrugging his shoulder, "I'm sure that's your affair. And I say, Skipper, we're grown up, so let's quit scrapping." He sat down and stretched himself before a little wood fire, and began to laugh.

"What's so funny?" said Alan, suspiciously.

"Guess Davy can figure it out."

He grew suddenly solemn and laid his hand on my arm.

"Some time, when I'm not around, you can tell him — you would, anyhow. Fact, Alan, I wasn't laughing at you. If you're good at guessing that ought to shut you up. Let's talk of other things."

Toinon came and stood warming her ankles at the fire, and looking down on the three of us. From her height she began to smile, in an amused way.

"You are alike as three ogres," she said drawing her finger over her eyebrows, to indicate the characteristic Littledale line. "You will lunch with us?"

"*Y-a de quoi manger, ma petite?*"

"*Mais, oui, et du bon vin.*"

Alan's voice was of a gentleness we had never heard. We offered to run out to a *charcutier's*, but he would not hear of it and, realizing that it might be a question of pride, we did not insist. There was no reason for our anxiety, for the lunch was delicious and under the mellowing influence of the extra bottle of wine the stiffness wore away. Yet the conversation was not exactly expansive.

"What made you get into it, Skipper?"

"More amusing than staying out. How about you?"

"Same with me."

"Davy said you were going in the ambulance."

"Just for a couple of months. I've been at Plattsburg. I'll strike for a commission as soon as we get in it."

Ben glanced at his watch, and jumped up.

"Hello! Must be off." He shook hands punctiliously with Toinon. "*Déjeuner très bon.* Good-bye, Skipper. Any time I get a chance at Paris, I'll look you up. Are you fixed all right for money?"

"Plenty."

"No offense. See you later, Davy."

He had been over an hour in the apartment, asked twenty questions, studied everything, and said nothing at all.

"Well, that's over," I said with a laugh.

"Yes, damn his cool cheek — but you're as bad as I am; we sat there listening to him as though we were both twelve years old," he said in his growling way.

"Habit, Alan. You see, Ben never has two ideas in his mind. Make a good officer."

"Probably. What was he hinting at? Domestic difficulties?"

Then I told him, omitting, of course, whatever concerned me personally.

"Yes, I see why he laughed," he said, when I had finished. "That was almost human. Is it possible, I wonder, that Ben has got a new point of view?"

"He is a clam, you know."

WE HAD gone back to our chairs before the fireplace. I saw that Alan was quite puzzled over Ben's history.

"Thinking of Ben?"

"Yes. Never figured him out that way," he said, meditatively. "You know, with all the antagonism he roused in me, at times, I used to envy him his disposition."

"Envy!"

"Yes. I thought a fellow like that would go ambling through life, getting just about what he wanted out of it, not worried by ideas or having much to struggle with. Guess I don't know so much about human nature, after all."

"There's a law of averages comes in, even with Ben."

"Suppose so. Did he take it hard?"

I nodded.

"Curious. I always thought of Ben as some robber baron of the Middle Ages. I'd sort of expect him to rig up a gallows and see justice done in good old Mousquetaire fashion."

"There were a couple of bad moments."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"Why the devil do we feel his leadership the way we do? We can think all round him. We've gone fifty years ahead of him."

"Funny. I've been puzzling over that myself."

"Suppose men of action aren't necessarily thinkers. We turn around an idea, see the complexities; a decision with us is a mental process of elimination. With him, it is instantaneous — an instinct; the primitive. That's why I'd have thought he'd strangle her."

"Family feeling counts."

"Yes, you're right — felt that as we three were sitting here; felt it strong. And a year ago I would have laughed at it. It's so. I may champ at the bit and rear. But I'm one of you Littledales, for all that."

Toinon brought in the coffee, slipped a pillow under his shoulders, and went back to the kitchen. He looked very like the *condottier* of the Middle Ages he described, as he sat sunk in his chair, the dressing-gown loose on his thin frame, the white bony hands locked under his chin, the deep eyes and stubbled hair, very gaunt and relentless.

"DAVY, it would be queer if I pulled through, after all."

I looked up in surprise.

"Course you're going to! What an idea! Why, you took my breath away when I came in — —"

"Honest?"

"Quite honest."

"You know a man like me doesn't fool himself," he said, staring into the fire. "To-day's a good day. But I do seem to be picking up. You know, I would like to live. I don't mind going, not at all. But — it's such an interesting world, I'd like to see what's going to happen, and — after."

He moved his hand in a feeble gesture, and the shadow it made crept across the sunlight that flooded the room.

"It's interesting when you've got to an impersonal point of view and you can stand and just look on. Youth is a sort of disease. I've lived through that fever, groped beyond my limitations, struggled with nightmares. It left some marks on me — not many. Funny, I feel just ready to begin life, now. . . ."

"I wish to God I could look at it that way," I said, impulsively.

"What way, Davy?" he said, a little puzzled, and by that I knew that he had been talking, not to me, but to some shadowy self.

"Looking at things impersonally."

I was making a pretense of emptying my pipe and turning I faced his sharp eyes.

"Want to talk it out, Davy?"

"Some day, perhaps. Not now."

"You're too young yet," he said. "You think in terms of yourself. Most of us do, and philosophy isn't going to help that."

"Right, there."

"Know what strikes me? We human beings have so damned little charity toward ourselves. All the institutions we've ever created, the Church, the State, Society — for we have created them — make us despise ourselves — look down upon ourselves. For two thousand years we've got the conception that we are weak, crawling worms, originally sinful, predestined to evil. We've been thundered at, frightened, cursed, and every agency has united to belittle us in our own eyes. And yet, Davy, look at the wonder of it — it's only a few thousand years since we were among the beasts of the field, groping in the darkness. And now, we have illuminated the night, ridden the air, sowed the earth, bridged the sea, abolished every impossibility, except the one thing — time. And it's not simply brain force — science, but the instinct toward a beautiful ideal, that's amazing in us, to evolve a Parthenon out of placing one stone on top of another, to blow into a sea-shell and imagine a modern orchestra; to create literature, painting, the forms of government, and all this in a few thousand years, despite this strange conception of our impotence and frailty. By Jove, sometimes, I almost want to go and just lift my hat in reverence to my race!"

"What's going to happen after this war is over?" I said, interested in this revelation of Alan.

"Here?"

"Well, I was thinking of America! Been thinking a lot about it lately. You've had the chance to knock about as I haven't. What do you think is coming?"

"I'll answer you like this," he said, reaching for a pipe which he held a moment nervously in his teeth, champing on it as a horse does on its bit. "It's all complex till you look at it in just one way. Look at it as you would the forces of nature. Forces of human nature act just the same way. That is, if you can see them in the proper perspective.

"There's only one genuine aristocracy in the world to-day; that's Germany. It is a genuine force, because it does lead, is educated to lead. England is an aristocracy that is more or less artificial struggling to hold the leadership it has inherited. And, Davy, I'm not so sure that Germany is going to be beaten."

"Well, I'll be damned — —"

"Germany and the German idea are two separate things. You've got to beat her thoroughly if you want to get rid of the German conception of the State. Just a stand-off won't do that. Quite frankly, to me the tragedy to-day is that the German idea of government, the finest modern conception, has got to be stamped out because it is harnessed to this inhuman, bestial, conscienceless Prussianism. It is economically sound and morally wrong."

"Well, Alan, I don't think I can follow you there," I said, warmly. "Perhaps I hate them too much to see any good in them, but —"

"Good? Why, Davy, what are you going to put up against them? Your other civilizations, based on individualism, without responsibility, order, discipline, efficiency? Whatever you may think about it, Germany has a logical conception, worked out to the minutest detail. What have we? A Government based on the theory of the consent of the governed. And who governs? Not the people — not the leaders we see — but something which remains in the shadows. We're plundered, we're wasteful, we're inefficient — we don't even know there is a science of government. Government annoys us. We conceive of the State as a big telephone central, a convenient policeman. It isn't an ideal; it isn't even a central idea to express all the future of a great Democracy. Why talk of the State when we can't govern even a single city! No other nation in the world could go in like that without being gobbled up. But we go in because we see no visible danger. David, I sometimes wonder if it wouldn't be better for us if Germany did win — just as it would bring us up short if we had the threat of a great civilization on our Mexican frontier."

"I grant that — but what if Germany doesn't win?"

"Then it won't be a question of what we've got to do but one of natural evolution. Let's go back to forces. Wherever you find the greatest force concentrating, there you'll find the ultimate power. What is a revolution but the shifting of the balance of power from an artificial force to a natural force. When the other order falters, weakens, sickens, it becomes an artificial control — the leadership is imposed and not genuine, and you can put it down as an axiom that an artificial force is a force whose days are numbered. Society is like an iceberg. Seven-tenths of it are under the surface, but when that upper minority dwindles below the line of safety the submerged mass rises to the sky. We have a new peak but the balance remains the same. That's all."

"I see what you're driving at," I admitted reluctantly for his method recalled to me the haunting prophecies of Peter Magnus.

"YOU'VE had the king idea and the aristocratic idea, and both theoretically were good ideas so long as you had the intelligent despot and the class that had the right to lead; and those ideas were practical ideas, so long as they were concentrated, unified, and efficient. Decay, before revolution, destroyed them. Then you've had the rise of the middle class, and remember this in all fairness, Davy, each class has always ruled in its own interest. Now, in America what class of force is there that is unified, concentrated and efficient to carry out its decisions?"

"Labor, and labor alone," I said, following his thought.

"Something greater than agitation has done it. It's the course of modern civilization — machinery. It began with the first invention. To-day it is an accelerating force. Ten thousand cobblers, scattered through a State are not a political force, but ten thousand workers in a shoe factory are. They live together, they think together, they become politically conscious. Davy, answer this to yourself — can you honestly believe there is anything going to prevent a class that has the power, that knows it has the power, from finally exercising that power, in the same way and for the same ends that every other social movement has acted?"

"No, not as you put it; not as I see it now."

"Why deceive ourselves? What is the meaning of a strike? More wages — better conditions? Not fundamentally. Every strike is one step onward in the solidification of this new political force — a skirmish before the final battle."

"Then you, too, think that the old order is passing?"

"Passing! It started to pass the day universal suffrage was proclaimed. I sup-

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pose now you'll ask me if I believe in Democracy."

"I confess I am wondering."

"Ask me if I believe in machinery! Why debate on what is an accomplished fact? Why ask if a river should move in its course? If machinery was inevitable, so Democracy was inevitable. We have proclaimed universal suffrage — now we must watch it work out to its logical conclusion. We've been proclaiming one thing and doing another for generations. Now, we're going to find out."

"Socialism, then?"

"Not necessarily. The rise of a new force; a perfectly natural appetite for power, that's all. Ideas are always translated into appetites. The Girondins were a body of idealists and the Revolution they produced immediately devoured them. As a matter of fact, men in the mass do not want anything different from men as privileged individuals — only they want the luxury for themselves, and when they are strong enough they seize it. To live first and then to enjoy life in a big and bigger way — the pursuit of happiness, if you wish. Just as strong in the mass as with us."

"I'll agree this much, Alan," I said. "Though I know much of what you've said is true, our American failure has been the failure to produce a continuing class of leadership. If those who are born to lead, who ought to be educated to lead, won't lead — they must take the consequences. And I'm hitting my own kind!"

"Particularly as others are preparing to take that leadership."

When I left I put out a hand with genuine admiration and affection.

"Well, Alan, it's pretty late to be finding it out, isn't it — but I'm glad I've really got to know you."

"Oh, that's all right," he said, gruffly, but pleased nevertheless. "Drop around. Lots more to be settled in the old world, you know. I say, Davy, I wonder what Ben would have thought of my heresies?"

We broke into a hearty laugh at this, and I went out.

When I reached the hotel I sat down and wrote out a little of the conversation to Bernoline. For I am anxious to know what she, with every instinct opposed, will say to it.

"Queer duck, Alan," said Ben that night at table. "How long did you stay?"

"About an hour or two."

"Could you get him to talk?"

"Yes, he opened up quite a bit."

"Don't like his dying there, like a dog. We ought to get him home."

"I'm afraid you'll find him rather obstinate."

"Don't like it."

"I think we'd better accept him on his own terms."

"Don't like it. Don't like his dying in a hole. Don't like the woman."

"Are we our brother's keeper?"

"Well, at least, we ought to have a good doctor in."

"I've thought of that."

I arranged for Dr. Murchison, a man I knew at Neuilly, to go over and make a thorough examination, cautioning him about dispelling illusions. His report, as I feared, leaves little hope; the lungs are badly affected. It can be only a question of time. . . .

Ben went off to-night.

At last her letter! It was waiting for me on the little table in the hall, among the mail from home. I went up the stairs breathlessly, without waiting for the elevator, and, shutting myself in, read it again and again.

"*Mon ami:*

I have waited a whole week since receiving your letter, for I wanted time to think — to think calmly and deliberately. It was wrong for me to leave the decision to you, as I did. I alone must bear the responsibility, for I only know all the facts, don't you see? I shall write you, as I promised, and my heart would have it — until God brings you safely through this war.

"David, I do this with many misgivings, and my doubts will always be with me. If, some later day, in your spirit, you may reproach me and wonder at my lack of courage —(some day, *mon ami*, you will do that, and this will be my punishment) remember this: that I should never have weakened as I have done if it were not that you are going again into this hideous war. All that I have told myself this long week — all my arguments, are as nothing when I say to myself that death will be your companion by day and by night. Even if some day you should blame me in the bitterness of your heart, I can not do otherwise — no woman could. I do not matter — you ask for my strength. It is yours.

"And now, *mon ami*, only one thing can justify the decision I have made, freely and not impulsively; the feeling that if God in some mysterious way has willed that I should come into your life, that it is not to weaken you, not to sadden you, but to give you strength and courage and that for knowing all the faith I have in you, you will rise to the big things.

"I have such a high ideal for you, *mon ami*. I know your strength and I know what you need. I feel about you a certain weakness — perhaps weakness is too strong a word — a certain longing for what a woman, a real woman, can give you. You do not speak what is in your heart easily — never to friends. It is through another that you will discover yourself. Some men are sufficient to themselves, and, if they do not know the greatest happiness — for women seldom love them — they are saved from much sorrow. You are not like that, David. You are sensitive to every impression and you need happiness to really find all the qualities of the heart that are waiting to be called forth. I could not bear the thought of your marrying the wrong woman. . . .

"For you are not meant to go through this world alone. It may seem strange — incomprehensible to you — that I can hold you so dear and yet look forward with such hope to your marrying some lovely young girl, like Anne Brinsmade, to complete your life. Yet it is so. It is the maternal in me, *mon ami*, that you always appeal to, since I have no right to the other. Let me then be in your life all that means hope and faith and ambition, during this period of trial, and if you wish to make me feel some little happiness, let me know that nothing I do will ever shatter your courage or prevent your seeking the happiness to which every man has a right. Let us keep then a nobility of spirit, *mon ami*, and without rebellion or sadness, face life as God in his mysterious knowledge has willed.

B."

WHEN I had read this through the first time — tumultuously — seeking to absorb it in one breath, I read it through again, slowly, stopping at every sentence, sometimes with every sense thrilling, sometimes with a black revolt against the obstinate struggle for a repression that I knew was not in her heart. I searched every phrase for a significance that might be concealed beneath the words, alternately high with hope and given over to despair. When I had read her letter for the fifth time, I laid it on my lap and abandoned myself to my thoughts. It had become so dark in my little bedroom that I could no longer distinguish her handwriting. Outside, over the young green of the trees, past the fading foliage of the Champs Elysées, the golden dome of the *Invalides* was paling in the sifting-in of the dusk. It is the hour of all the day to which I am most sensitive, the hour, when shared, which brings a tenderness to the heart that raises us triumphant above the riot of the city, but an hour, when faced alone, that oppresses the imagination and weighs it down with the futility of hoping against the inevitable — when memories of vanished happiness are too acute and separation intolerable.

I rose hurriedly, lit my candle, and drew the curtains. How many emotions thronged into my heart as I sat down at my table and turned her letter in my hands, the soft blue paper, with the thin and rounded handwriting, that was all Bernoline — order, discipline and delicacy. My first impulse was to take up my chronicle of my days and write to her while the mood was strong. I remained an hour staring at an empty page, unable to phrase a thought. And, even now, what is in my mind? There are moments when I face the truth without wavering, and tell myself that her instinct is right — that there is no outcome possible for me — that I am wilfully, blindly, plunging ahead into an entanglement that will wreck my whole life; that I am wrong in overcoming her determination and forcing a situation which is against her intuitions. For in her tradition there is no escape even from the most hideous of marriages.

The idea of her being married is unbearable to me, and I revolt against the inhumanity and immorality of such enforced slavery. At the thought of her sensitive fragile spirit at the brutal whim of a husband she loathes. . . . No, I cannot bear to dwell on what may have happened — thank God, her body, at least, is now free. Perhaps that is the explanation of her anonymity and her terror of retaining even a trace of her past identity.

As I write, an extraordinary thought flashes into my mind — extraordinary because, strangely enough, it has never occurred to me before — are there children in her life, too? I remember, now, how she shrank from the touch of Master Jack that morning on the boat when we told fairy-tales. Can it be possible? And why has such a supposition never occurred to me before? And yet, no — I do not think this possible. It is possible that there may have been a child, but not that there is a child that is living to-day — no, that is quite unthinkable! For with her faith, her clear sense of duty, her acceptance of sacrifice — no, that is impossible, quite impossible.

At least there is this consolation for me, sitting here alone and separated by time and distance; I know how profoundly her heart has gone out to me; that despite all her traditions she has been unable to close the door and put me out of her life. Whatever the waiting, to know that is to have something to cling to. Who knows? This war in which my life must be risked — may free us both!

Now, that I can think more sanely, and that every word of hers is written in my memory — thank God that there is only one feeling in my heart, and that for her. Who am I to pit my sorrow against hers. I shall do as she asks of me. No written word of mine shall ever cause her a regret or a pain if I can help it. And that will not be easy, for it means a constant struggle — a constant check on every impulse.

After all, are not my little reasonings quite futile? What must be, will be. We have ventured unwittingly from the safe shallows into the great tumult of life and destiny, and it will bear us where it wills. So, why debate and wonder?

In the same mail a letter from Anne. Only a few pitiful words — but reading them has broken me all up:

"This is not a letter, David; just a message. I am so sorry. If I could only make it easier to bear. . . . Bless you.

Anne."

◆

April

At last! Yesterday, America declared war. It is my fight now. I shall be transferred, at once.

(*The next instalment of Owen Johnson's "The Wasted Generation" will appear in the October McClure's.*)

Miss Nemesis

[*Continued from page 11*]

that Chapin's father had literally died of a broken heart, with the assistance of nervous prostration. He told her that in eight years Chapin's longest vacation had endured for a single week. He told her that Chapin's sense of honor was colossal; that he regarded the company's debts as his own, and that, in case of bankruptcy, he wouldn't hide behind his legal limitations. "It ain't any wonder he's spittin' at everybody like he does," said Waldron. "It's a wonder he ain't in an institution. Nobody *can* work like he does — nights and Sundays, too — but Arnold, he *does* it. And if he'd ever had anythin' to *do* with, he'd be hog rich, Arnold would."

At the end of the week, she promoted herself to the next humblest of clerical positions. Chapin still said good-morning and good-night to her, and sometimes he added a trite remark about nothing in particular, but this was the very frontier of their conversation. Another fortnight passed, and Miss Cloud, realizing that she learned routine with great rapidity, thought that her classmates hadn't misjudged her. Yet, when a special meeting of the stockholders made her a director, and when the directors solemnly made her vice-president, she was almost embarrassed. Her titles were so grand and her usefulness was so narrow.

Also, she was perplexed by her own satisfaction in clerical work. Theoretically, she was a traitor to her own theories; practically, she was glad to be responsible for as little as possible. She was happier to be told what to do, and how to do it, than she would have been to direct other people; and this annoyed her, because it seemed to destroy some of the ideas which at college she had absorbed so carefully, and at the expenditure of so much precious time.

Her feelings toward Chapin had altered, automatically. She argued that his overwork wasn't necessarily an excuse for his conduct, but at least it was an explanation. She ceased to resent his manner; he didn't want to be bothered, and he frankly put business ahead of everything, even diplomacy. But she told herself that no ideal was worth the sacrifice which Chapin was making for it; and without allowing herself any personal sentiment, she began to consider how she could save him from the tragedy of a breakdown. It wasn't for the sake of Chapin, individually; it was the urge of her feminine instincts.

She was putting on her gloves, one evening, when something entirely unexpected came up in her throat and stayed there. She was looking at Chapin's back; and she could imagine all the interminable strain which must have been required to make so young a man sit so old. The full extent of his purpose came home to her, and she marveled at his stoic endurance, wasted to maintain a name on a brass sign-plate. As Waldron had said, Chapin, with a fair start, could have been a magnate; and he had deliberately given up his own prospects in order to advance a dead man's hope. She pitied him, and her pity was all the more abundant because Chapin didn't ask for it, didn't want it, and, presumably, didn't consider himself entitled to it.

She drew off her gloves; she returned her hat to the rack; she sat down and picked up a pamphlet on Drawbacks. At the outset, she thought it to be a sort of tract which had to do with character defects, but in a minute or two she was both interested and confused.

At a quarter of six, Chapin noticed her. "Not through yet?" he asked, absently.

She replied indirectly. "What's a drawback, Mr. Chapin?"

"Why," he said, not giving her all his attention, but continuing to write as he talked, "when an exporter — sends out goods made from raw materials that he had to *import*, — the government refunds him — the original duty he paid on the — imported material. That's called — a drawback. It gives the exporter — a chance to cut down his cost of production, so he can compete in countries — where the manufacturing cost of things — isn't so high. Clear?"

"Oh! Thank you very much." She settled herself, and went on reading.

Chapin wrote steadily for three minutes: "You're not staying overtime to read *that* stuff, are you?"

"Why not? I'm studying."

For the next half-hour the room was in silence. Then Chapin: "Do you know what time it is?"

"Oh, yes."

He was running his forefinger down a column of figures. "Better go home, hadn't you?"

"When are *you* going?"

"Pretty late, to-night." He reached for a fresh stack of papers.

"Well," said Miss Cloud, with pleasant emphasis, "I don't believe in letting one partner do all the work, so I'll stay as long as you do."

He lifted his head, but didn't turn it. "Nonsense. I'll run out to get a bite to eat, and then I'll be here until eleven or so."

"That suits me perfectly."

He turned now, with a jerk. "Well, it doesn't suit *me* to have you. It's nonsense."

"Have I been too noisy?"

"That's not it, and you know it. Work all you want to at home, nights, but not here. I'm thinking of what people would say."

"Well, what *would* they say?"

Chapin was intolerant. "My dear girl, if you haven't any more respect for gossip than that, I *have*."

She laughed a little. "Is your reputation really as fragile as all that, Mr. Chapin?"

"I'm not thinking of myself."

Miss Cloud refused to take her eyes from the pamphlet. "I know you aren't. But you're perfectly idiotic to act the way you do. You're simply battering your brains out. You don't get any recreation or exercise or *anything*. You're so tired that you have to stay here twelve hours to do six hours' work. Well, I can't stop you, but hereafter I intend to be here exactly as long as you are. Be-

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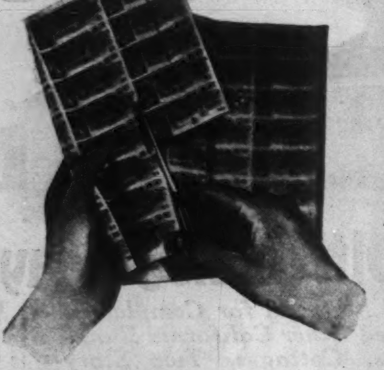

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cause if the company's in such shape that *you* have to work like this, then I do, too."

"Miss Cloud — there are some things I absolutely have to finish to-night. I — —"

"And I've absolutely got to learn all about drawbacks before I go home."

"If this is your idea of humor — —"

"Humor!" She dropped the pamphlet. "I thought I came in here to be an executive. That was *my* idea of it, anyway. As it turns out, I'm a clerk. I'm doing what there is to be done. But if this company needs me as a governess, or a nurse, or a night watchman, more than it needs me as a clerk or an executive, why — I'm right here. . . . You aren't using ordinary common sense. You aren't human. I know there isn't any use in arguing with you, so I'm trying another tack. You say I mustn't stay because somebody would talk. Thanks for the compliment; I didn't suppose I was that attractive. Well, I'm *going* to stay. I'm an officer of the company and I've as much right here as you have. So you can take your choice between gossip and — anything else."

Chapin looked very white and tired; and his voice was like an abrasive. "I don't want to argue about it, but — —"

"You *can't* argue about it. There's no argument."

"Look here! These things —" He slapped the papers on his desk — "have *got* to be finished. I'm going to finish them. You're going home. Understand that right here and right now. If you don't know enough to be careful of your own actions —"

"You'll take care of them for me?" She shook her head. "Oh, no. I'm just as stubborn as you are — and maybe I'm stubborner."

Chapin stood up, wearily. "I was just going out to dinner, anyway. . . . If you want to come along with me, and fight it out, we won't be wasting so much time. But I'm going to stay here to-night, and you're not, and that settles it."

She began to laugh, and when she saw Chapin's expression, she laughed all the harder. "Thank you," she said. "That's the most refreshing style of invitation I ever heard. Let's go and have dinner together — Dutch."

They dined in an empty restaurant, and fought without a truce from soup to *demitasse*. Chapin began with what he called pure reason, and ended with wild prophecies of disaster; Miss Cloud was consistently calm, and firm, and slightly maternal. They started back to the office, and halted, for another battle, at the first corner; they halted twice more, before they arrived at the Maritime Building. In the lobby, Chapin made a final effort to restrain her, and then wilted.

"I wouldn't let any other girl do it — stay there until midnight — stenographer even — and if you're going to take advantage of your position — —"

"I've told you fifty times I'm going to," she assured him, cheerfully.

Chapin turned his back on the elevator. "Very well . . . I won't go up. I hope you're pleased with your success. Good-night."

Her voice spun him around like a top. "Why, Mr. Chapin!"

"What's the matter now? Haven't I said I — —"

"Don't you think it would be a little more polite for you to *offer* to take me home?"

"Oh!" said Chapin, and flushed crimson. "I'm sorry. I . . . my mind was on something else. I beg your pardon. There's a taxi-stand over by the Custom House."

She had originally intended to refuse the offer, even if he made it, but without any good reason, she accepted it instead. "The subway's good enough. Let's take that. And it's very kind of you, Mr. Chapin, and I appreciate it." Half-way uptown, she said to him: "Are you going to use some common sense about your work after this?" He didn't hear her; and she said, with more stress: "What are you thinking about?"

Chapin jumped. "Why — I was thinking what an unusual day it's been. First evening in — let's see — in about two years I haven't either worked at the office or taken some stuff home with me. First time I've taken a girl to dinner since — Lord knows when. And I *almost* broke another world's record, too."

"What was it?"

"Guess."

"Oh, I couldn't. You'll have to tell me."

She had never, until now, seen him smile whole-heartedly, and she was amazed by the transformation. It subtracted a decade from his age, and added a thousand per cent. to his good looks. "Come to think of it, I never took a girl home in a taxicab in my life. Financially, I'm on the ragged edge of nothing, but — come on! Let's get out and find one. This may be my last chance. Will you?"

In the forty blocks, she rearranged several of her opinions. For one thing, she decided that Chapin wasn't fundamentally boorish; he just didn't know how to treat women. He treated them as outspokenly as though they were men. And only a few months ago she had been harping on the business equality of the sexes! No, Chapin wasn't a boor; he had made himself a hermit in society, and forgotten the little meaningless courtesies that women want. And besides, he had probably thought that she meant to upset the office with welfare and fine notions. She forgave him, progressively, and when he left her with another smile, she was all but thoroughly conciliated.

In the morning, the circles under his eyes were one degree less prominent, and Miss Cloud felt like a conqueror. In the afternoon — it was Saturday — she went for a walk, and repeatedly assured herself that she was walking aimlessly, but she happened to find herself before a certain studio, which she knew by its advertisements, and she thought that as long as she was there, she might as well go in.

When she emerged, she was still dazed, and incredulous; and when she posed before her mirror, at home, she was filled with joy for the future, and regret for the past. The massage was a routine performance, and her complexion had already been exquisite; but the hairdresser had been an artist.

"Well, anyhow," she said to herself, "if they voted for the most beautiful girl in Chapin and Company — —"

And then she blushed, and hid her face from her own mirror, and was deliciously ashamed of herself. In the midst of shame, she had time to think of her favorite professor at Waban, and to wonder if some of his views — not all of them — weren't just a little bit reactionary.

OVERNIGHT, Chapin was a different man; a conversationalist, a sympathizer. He told her, frankly, that he didn't approve of business women, especially when they were volunteers and not conscripts; but at the same time he proved that he was interested in her progress. He praised her for initiative, and said that she was learning the business from the proper angle. More than that, he began to confide in her; and even if his confidences were baldly commercial, yet she was pleased, because she knew that she had no predecessor. Formerly, he had kept the company's troubles to himself, and let them fester. And she knew that he was willing to confide in her because he was friendly.

He showed her none of the small attentions which she would have expected from any other man, none of the petty deference which she would have expected even from another employer; but she realized that there were two sound causes for the deficiency — he wasn't yet aware of her, in the intimately personal sense, and his social instincts had been crushed nearly to powder by his acute concentration. He treated her, now, as though she were on a level footing with him, commercially, intellectually, individually. When he talked to her, he talked to her mind. This is what she had said, in college, was a woman's vested privilege; but now that she had been granted it, she was piqued as often as she was flattered.

"If we only had *working* capital," he said, forcefully. "Freight rates aren't so bad, but look at those cussed ships of ours! *We* can't hope for any time-charters with a fleet of tin dish-pans like the *Currituck*. It's darned near a fraud on the insurance people even to send her out on single trips. If we could ever get our hands on forty or fifty thousand dollars to spend for repairs, we'd go ahead like an engine on greased rails."

She heard her own voice, speaking from a great distance. "Well, I've got about fifty thousand . . . isn't that enough?"

Chapin put out his hand, impulsively, and touched her arm. "Oh, my dear girl! That's generous, and all that, but I couldn't *think* — —"

"Why not? It's my own money. If you're sure that would save us."

"I *know* it would. But it's out of the question. Oh — absolutely! I couldn't dream of it."

She laughed unsteadily. "If you're going to argue again, I'll call a directors' meeting. Sunny Jim and I'll outvote you. You know we will. And you know I've had the best of it every time you and I've had a fight — now, haven't I? So why not agree peaceably? Only — I'm afraid I *will* have to have a salary, then. More than I'm worth — oh, *lots* more than I'm worth — just enough to live on. Honestly, I want to do it. *Have* I got to fight for it, or not?"

It was when she tried to understand her own impulse, and to understand why, in order to save this poor little struggling company — no, not that, merely in order to give it a chance for its life — she was ready to risk her entire fortune, it was then that she realized the blinding fact that she had fallen in love with Chapin.

Through a haze of excitement, and in spite of Chapin's almost hysterical opposition, she had her way; Waldron supported her, loyally; the directors voted, two to one, to issue new stock, to be subscribed for, *pro rata*, by the present stockholders, who were given three years of grace in which to take up their subscriptions. Miss Cloud paid cash for four hundred and ninety-nine shares of that new issue. She relaxed, and trembled uncontrollably.

"*Now*," she whispered, "now it isn't whether I'm most likely to suceeed or not — now I've *got* to!"

Far to the eastward, a self-appointed archangel waved his hand, and there was war. For a few days, export trade ticked on as usual; then, feebly, it ran down and stopped short, and the port of New York was choked with steamships lacking fires, and freights and definite futures. The world was waiting to see what happened on the Continent, and naturally America left no valuables on the front door-step.

To Chapin, the situation was a nightmare. Revenue was knifed off, cleanly, while overhead went on, unchecked. The money slid away for salaries and costs, but the salaries were paid to involuntary idlers, and the costs were necessary to hold the force together. The only alternative was to discharge the office employees and the ships' employees and trust to luck to get them back again, if trade returned to normal. But if they couldn't be got back? Then the ships would remain white elephants, as to-day.

Illogically, Chapin felt that if Miss Cloud lost her money in this despairing fashion, it would be his own fault. He blamed himself, because he was in the habit of taking the blame for everything which affected the company adversely. His worries capsized his judgment, and for the first time in his experience, he had no confidence in himself. Each day, he was sure that yesterday he had done unwisely. He countermanded the order for repairs to the *Currituck;* reversed the decision, and then reversed it again. And because he was so sorry for Miss Cloud, and so convinced of his own guilt, he hardly let her out of his sight; he wanted to be near her, so as to confirm, by every word and action, the pledge of his sincerity and his intention to make all things right again — somehow.

Then, of a sudden, he was the victim of an odd sensation of dizziness and instability; and as soon as it was well upon him, he knew what it meant. He held himself together just long enough to write out a brief statement of policy, and then he proceeded, with characteristic thoroughness, to go to pieces.

Helpless, Miss Cloud would have leaned on Waldron, but Waldron's backbone was gelatine. She stood alone, oppressed by a higher moral obligation toward Chapin than Chapin had felt toward her uncle, or his own father. But Chapin had needed only capital; and even if Miss Cloud had been a genius, how could she guess the outcome of the winter? And she wasn't a genius; she was only a frightened girl.

Her concern was infinitely more for Chapin than for the company and her little fortune, but she compelled herself to think of ships and sailings. She compelled herself to go to other offices, to interview other executives, and beg for advice, but the advice was no more cogent than Waldron's. They invited her to lunch, but they couldn't unravel fate for her.

As soon as the doctor gave permission, she went up to see Chapin; and he wanted her to sit very near to him and hold his hand. Obviously, however, his desires had no personal application. He wanted merely the consciousness of sympathy, and a hatchet-faced nurse or a yawning interne would have served the purpose quite as adequately. To be sure, he pressed her fingers when she finally rose, but his expression was wooden, and she had to be very animated to keep from crying. What she wanted to do was to drop down beside him, and take him in her arms, and pet him and comfort him; and what she actually said was: "I'll come up again in a day or two, if you're sure I don't bore you."

SHE returned to the office, where Waldron was waiting for her. "Looky here, Miss Cloud, this can't go on. It *can't*. Every time I write a check it gives me the blue creeps. Ten, twelve weeks more we'll be flat busted. I move we shut up shop. Save what we got."

It was the twentieth repetition, and she began to grow feverish. "But if things should begin again ——"

"Well — maybe we could hire people back. Still, they been with us a long time, and if we let 'em go when other companies is takin' *care* of their men ——"

Fidgeting, she examined the instructions which Chapin had written out for her. His motto was to play safe, always and for ever to play safe. But how was one to play safe when there were only two alternatives, and either might prove fatal? She couldn't even try to sell the three ships; ships had become liabilities instead of assets.

"If the war stops in a month or two ——"

"Our money'll be gone," said Waldron, a dejected rabbit.

"And if it *doesn't* ——"

He shrugged his shoulders. "*I* don't know what'll happen."

Miss Cloud lost her patience. "And you've spent thirty-eight years in the shipping business, and you don't know how to make the simplest kind of a deduction!" She forgot that all the magnates were equally at sea. "What *do* you know, anyway?"

"Well," he said, apologetically, "I know if we had a lot o' cash we could buy up some good ships dirt cheap, right now. And if things broke right ——"

"Buy ships *now!*"

The treasurer almost telescoped himself with abasement. "Well, I s'pose it *would* be sort o' silly."

Miss Cloud hesitated. "And yet if the war lasted long enough for us to export guns and things ——"

"That's just guesswork. That's gamblin'!"

She struck her hand on the desk, and the treasurer jumped. "But if we don't know the A B C of the shipping business, why *shouldn't* we go ahead and gamble? We've got to do *some*thing, or we'll lose all our money paying for overhead. And it isn't any more gambling than it would be to keep on running, is it? . . . What could we buy with what money there is left?"

He grinned, weakly. "A couple o' ferry-boats, I guess. Or options. We could buy up some options on ships awful cheap. They'd take most anything, with traffic held up this way."

Miss Cloud thought of Chapin, up in the hospital, and of Chapin's father. She also reminded herself that when the jam was broken, if ever, she was totally incompetent to manage the business — capital or no capital. Power was one thing, but ability was another; and at college, no one had seen the difference.

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"Yes, ma'am," said the third director.

Mysteriously, all her fright was gone. She had removed herself, and Chapin, from any further possibility of action. She had deliberately closed her eyes to the nature of the shipping business, of which she knew nothing, and put her faith in Providence, of which she knew as much as anybody else. Now, she could wait serenely until the climax. Chapin and Company owned a number of options, bought at ridiculously low figures, and calling for ridiculously low purchase prices, and in three months' time, when the options expired, they would either be worth twice as much as she paid for them, or they would be worth precisely zero. If they were worthless, the company would be no worse off, and no better, than if she had never existed. It was her own money which had paid the bills.

SHE dismissed the office force, leaving only Waldron, herself, the switchboard operator and an errand boy. She dismissed the entire personnel of the ships. She had retained perhaps two thousand dollars to support herself — and Waldron — until the break came, and she was entirely indifferent to what might happen if the break were against her. At the worst, it would only mean that she would have to begin over again — to vindicate the opinion of her classmates by a different procedure — to work up from the bottom instead of working down from the top. And as she reviewed what she had done, she didn't regret it. She had risked her inheritance for Chapin's sake; and she knew that she would always be glad of her choice. As to Power — she scorned it; what she craved was a home, and contentment.

Chapin was sitting up now; and the doctors had ordered him to Pinehurst for the balance of the season. "I hate to go," he said. "I feel like a deserter. But if you'll keep on playing safe, I believe it'll pay. This thing isn't going to end in a hurry; and I'll try to brace up and get back in time to catch the rush. We'll pull out of it yet."

She didn't dare to tell him what she had done. She knew that it would cause a relapse which might be dangerous. She lied cheerfully to him, and saw him aboard the train, and kissed her fingers to him through the window, and went back to the office, where there was nothing to do but to watch the clock and the calendar. Sometimes she thought of her pet professor at Waban, and once or twice she wished she had the vulgarity to write him an anonymous letter, telling him that he deserved to lose his appointment.

At first she dated current events by the calendar, but when the world began to move fast enough, she found that she had to reckon them by the clock. A scattering of war contracts reached America, and the manufacturers began to think of ships. Presently some one telephoned to Miss Cloud in reference to one of her options; and made an offer. She refused it; the profit wasn't enough. Another offer came to her, and she refused that, too. Then in a twinkling there rose up a tremendous roar for ships, for any old ships, for any antediluvian tub that could float as far as Liverpool or Havre, whether it could float home again or not. Her contracts were worth, not double what she paid for them, but three, four, five times as much; and Miss Cloud sat, winking hard, and trying to believe what Waldron was shouting at her.

"*Now* we'll get the force back!" he crowed. "We got a hundred and twenty thousand cold cash! *Now* we'll show 'em!"

Miss Cloud winked away the last tear, and shook her head. "Silly! We'll do nothing of the kind! You don't know the first thing about shipping, and neither do I. We're children. But you tell me the best engineer you know, and the best captain — or you find out who they are — and we *will* do something! Don't stand there gawking at me; go *do* it!"

He paused, gleefully. "Have you wired Arnold?"

"No, and I'm not going to."

"Not *goin'* to!"

"No. Oh, I'm letting him know *something* about it, but don't you think it would be better to have part of it a surprise when he comes back?"

"How do you . . . Oh!" He grinned widely. "Show him you and me ain't quite as big fools as he made us out?"

"Exactly," said Miss Cloud, waving him out.

As the world went faster, she grew calmer and calmer. She recognized the change in herself, but she didn't know that it was the inevitable result of money-power; she knew that she was tired of a business atmosphere, and that she wanted the peace of a household as soon as she could get it. To Chapin's frantic telegram she replied, conservatively, that prospects were very bright, and that money was in the making. He implored her to run South, for at least a day's conference, and she wired back that she was far too busy to think of leaving New York. Then Chapin wrote her a most peculiar letter.

It began commercially enough, but toward the middle it graded off into a reminiscent vein, and the last few paragraphs were distinctly unbusinesslike. "I want to see *you*," he said. "I have to sit on the veranda with a lot of old ladies, and they seem to think I'm as old as they are. Remember how you blackguarded me from working nights? Well, if you don't come down, *I'll come up*, and I swear it by Christopher Columbus."

Her heart almost stopped beating, but she wrote out a very sedate note, in which she said that she might possibly scheme to get away a week from Thursday, although it was doubtful. If she could get away at all, however, she could do it then. She sent off the message, and then she hurried over to buy her Pullman space for a week from Thursday, and after that she divided her time between the office and the studio which had taught her how to be completely adorable.

Chapin met her at the station, and welcomed her with pleasure, but without apparent sentiment. "My!" he said. "It's good to see somebody from the office again!"

Miss Cloud shivered. "It must be. I thought of sending Waldron, but he said he couldn't sleep on the train."

Chapin stared. "Waldron! Humph!" This was the nearest approach to a compliment he had ever paid her.

They sat on the veranda and talked shop — or rather, they sat on the veranda, while Chapin tried to pry specific information out of Miss Cloud. Eventually he gave it up, and took her over to the Country Club for lunch; and subsequently, he took her across the golf-course to a magnificent grove of pines, where he said he came daily, to escape the chatter at the hotel.

She looked at him knowingly. "You wouldn't admit — not for *anything* — that you come here because you like it, would you? What's the matter — do you think it isn't manly to have any emotions?"

Chapin looked away. "Oh, I have emotions . . . Trouble is, I don't know how to get 'em out of my system. You're rather like that, too, aren't you?"

"Some people think so."

"Very many?" he asked, amusedly.

"A hundred and thirty-nine that I know of."

Chapin smiled, but the smile soon faded, and he was again reflective. "You know," he said, slowly, "you're a great girl."

Miss Cloud professed, in turn, to be amused. "Am I? Why?"

"Bluffer."

"Oh, how ridiculous."

Chapin nodded emphatically. "Bluffer — and still ingenuous. Seems like a paradox, doesn't it? But that's what you are. I've always thought so. Mighty hard to understand."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that!"

"*I* would." He smiled at her. "What was your idea in not telling me what you'd done with the company? Didn't you suppose I'd find out? Didn't you know that a lot of the shipping crowd come down here regularly?"

SHE gazed at him a moment, and then her eyes filled. "Oh — that's a shame! Oh, I wanted it to be a surprise! I *did!*"

"I supposed you had some good reason for keeping me in the dark. What was it? Wanted all the glory yourself?" He changed his tone instantly. "I didn't mean that; I was joking. What was it, please?"

"I — I w-wanted you to come back in May, and . . . oh, I *am* so disappointed! Why didn't you *say* on the veranda that you knew?"

"I couldn't figure out what was in your mind. . . . Why should you want to surprise me, anyway? Why didn't you keep me posted as you went along?"

Miss Cloud wouldn't look at him. "After the way I came *into* the company, I — I had my own idea about the way I'd get out."

"Oh! — When I came back?"

"Yes. I was going to show you the books, and . . . leave."

There was a long pause. "You don't

like it as much as you thought you would?"

"*Like* it? I loathe it."

"You could have sent for me a month ago I'm strong enough."

"But the Doctor *said* six months — if you were going to get over it completely."

Chapin was very solemn. "That was really thoughtful . . . You've made a lot of money, haven't you?"

She nodded, tremulously. "Heaps of it. Heaps."

"Somebody told me it was a couple of hundred thousand."

"W-we made *that* on the first five ships."

Chapin's eyes widened. "Whose idea was it to buy options?"

"M-Mr. Waldron's."

"Hm! Whose idea was it to get out of the forwarding business, and go in for ship brokerage?"

"M-Mr. Waldron's."

Chapin laughed. "You little liar! Waldron's written me two letters a week for the last two months! Said he didn't know what your idea was, but he thought I had a right to hear what my own company was doing." He sobered, gradually. "I want to tell you something . . . The first day you came into the office, I felt that you were a kind of Nemesis for me — I *knew* it. I had a hunch. I knew you were going to do things to my whole life. I knew it before I even saw you. And I was desperately afraid — after all I'd done and my father had done — well, I was afraid to have you there. And you *have* turned everything upside down. You beat me that first day. You made a fool of me. And then you offered to put up more money — all you had — and I wouldn't take it, so you beat me again. And then you absolutely disregarded what I told you about policy — and *see* what you've done!"

"Yes, *see* what I've done! I've made you rich. I've — —"

His voice was lower. "You've spoiled my business. You've made a monkey of me. *I* haven't done what I hoped to do with Chapin and Company — *you've* turned it into a different channel, and *you've* brought it to port."

"And . . . and so you hate me for that! When I cared enough to — —"

"Hate you? *Hate* you?" Chapin cleared his throat, nervously. "Why, — why I've loved you ever since the first few days! I — —"

Miss Cloud drew back, paralyzed. "You *have!*"

"Certainly. Didn't you know it? Haven't I shown it?"

"*Shown* it!" she gasped, on the verge of hysteria.

He nodded, affirmatively. "I don't see how I could have made it any plainer. What did you think I was doing — simply flirting with you?"

By this time she was beyond laughter and beyond tears. She saw that he was utterly sincere in his belief that he was transparent. Before she could speak, however, Chapin said something else. "You *must* have known, though — you *must* have known. Because if you hadn't, why on earth would you have acted the way you have? Like an iceberg. Keeping me at a distance. Trying to put me in a corner and keep me there. Just as you're doing now. Your letters — —"

Miss Cloud perceived that she would have to be very modern indeed, unless she chose to make a martyr of herself. "You didn't expect I'd tell you *first*, did you?" she faltered.

Chapin stared at her, speechless. He put out his hand, awkwardly. He swallowed hard. "Why — what I was trying to tell you — you've made *every*thing different — and we're all yours if you want us — the company and me, and — why, Peggy — —"

"All I want," she whispered, "is — you."

Then she had to turn her head away, for she knew that in another moment he would kiss her — and she was suddenly very faint and frightened.

After Waldron had received his message, he told his stenographer not to transcribe a long letter he had just finished dictating. It had been to report the sale of the *Currituck* to a British syndicate for three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. "Shucks!" said the treasurer. "*They* wouldn't care if it wasn't only three dollars and fifty cents." And put his foot on his new mahogany desk, and grinned broadly.

The class secretary frowned in perplexity. "Well, of course I'm glad of it — but I wonder why she thought she had to *telegraph?*"

If the secretary had only known it, Miss Cloud was simply advising the class, as soon as possible, that she had achieved success. But she was always a difficult girl to comprehend.

Fishers of the Air

— *Continued from page 25*

and with a lightning pounce fixed her talons upon the fish's head. They bit deep, and through and through. On the instant his struggles grew feeble, then died away. The exhausted male let go his hold and rose a few yards into the air on heavy wings; while his victorious mate flapped onward to the beach half carrying her prey, half dragging it through the water. With a mighty effort she threw it clear up on the silver sand. Then she dropped it and alighted beside it, with one foot firmly clutching it in sign of victory. Her mate promptly landed beside her; whereupon she withdrew her grip in acknowledgment that the kill was truly his.

After a few minutes' rest, during which the male bird shook and preened his ruffled plumage into order, the pair fell to at their feast, tearing off great fragments of their prey and devouring them hastily lest the eagle should return, or the eagle's yet more savage mate, and snatch the booty from them. Their object was to reduce it to a size that could be carried home conveniently to the nest. In this they were making swift progress, when the banquet was interrupted. A long-limbed woodsman in grey homespun, with a grizzled beard and twinkling grey-blue eyes, and a rifle over his shoulder, came suddenly into close view around a bend of the shore.

The two ospreys left their feast and flapped up into the top of a near-by pine-tree. They knew the man, and knew him unoffending as far as they were concerned. He had been a near neighbor ever since their arrival from the south that spring, for his rough shack, roofed with sheets of whitish-yellow birch bark, stood in full view of their nest and hardly two hundred paces from it. Furthermore, they were well accustomed to the sight of him in his canoe on the lake, where he was scarcely less assiduous a fisherman than themselves. But they were shy of him, nevertheless, and would not let him watch them at their feeding. They preferred to watch him instead, unafraid and quite unresentful but mildly curious, as he strolled up to the mangled body of the fish and turned it over with the toe of his moccasined foot.

"Jee-hoshaphat!" he muttered admiringly, "Who'd ever a' thought them there fish-hawks could a' handled a togue ez big ez that! Some birds!"

He waved a lean and hairy brown hand approvingly at the two ospreys in the pine-top, and then moved on with his loose-jointed stride up through the trees toward his shack. The birds sat watching him impassively, unwilling to resume their feast till he should be out of sight. And the big fish lay glittering in the sun, a staringly conspicuous object on the empty beach.

But other eyes meanwhile — shrewd, savage, greedy eyes — had marked and coveted the alluring prize. The moment the woodsman disappeared around the nearest clump of firs an immense black bear burst out through the under-brush and came slouching down the beach toward the dead fish. He did not hurry, for who among the wild kindred would be so bold as to interfere with him, the monarch of the wild?

He was within five or six feet of the prey. Then, there was a sudden rush of wind above his head — harsh, rigid wings brushed confusingly across his face — and the torn body of the fish, snatched from under his very nose, was swept into the air. With a squeal of disappointed fury he made a lunge for it; but it was too late. The female osprey, fresher than her mate, had again intervened in time to save the prize, and lifted it beyond his reach.

Now under ordinary circumstances the bear had no grudge against the ospreys. But this was an insult not to be borne. The fish had been left upon the beach, and he regarded it as his. To be robbed of his prey was the most intolerable of affronts; and there is no beast more tenacious than the bear in avenging any wrong to his personal dignity.

The osprey, weighed down by her heavy burden, flew low and slowly toward the nest. Her mate flew just above her, encouraging her with soft cries of *Pip-pip-pip, pip-pip-pip, pip-pip-pip;* while the bear galloped lumberingly beneath, his heart swelling with vindictive wrath. Hasten as he would, however, he soon lost sight of them; but he knew very well where the nest was, having seen it many times in his prowlings, so he kept on, chewing his plans for vengeance. He would teach the presumptuous birds that his overlordship of the forest was not lightly to be flouted.

After four or five minutes of clambering over a tangle of rocks and windfalls he arrived at the foot of the naked pine-trunk which bore the huge nest in its crotch, nearly fifty feet above the ground. He paused for a moment to glare up at it with wicked eyes. The two ospreys, apparently heedless of his presence and its dreadful menace, were busily tearing fragments of the fish into fine shreds and feeding their hungry nestlings. *His* fish, as the bear told himself, raging at their insolent self-confidence. He would claw the nest to pieces from beneath, and devour both the nestlings themselves and the prey which had been snatched from him. He reared himself against the trunk and began to climb, laboriously, because the trunk was too huge for a good grip, and with a loud rattling of claws upon the dry, resonant wood.

At that first ominous sound the ospreys took alarm. Peering both together over the edge of the nest they realized at once the appalling peril, a peril beyond anything they had ever dreamed of. With sharp cries of rage and despair they swooped downward and dashed madly upon their monstrous foe. First one and then the other, and sometimes both together, they struck him, buffeting him about the face with their wings, stabbing at him in a frenzy with beak and talons. He could not strike back at them; but on the other hand they could make little impression upon his tough hide under its dense mat of fur. The utmost they could do was to hamper and delay his progress a little. He shut his eyes and climbed on doggedly, intent upon his vengeance.

The woodsman, approaching his shack, was struck by that chorus of shrill cries, with a note in them which he had never heard before. From where he stood he could see the nest, but not the trunk below it. "Somethin' wrong there!" he muttered, and hurried forward to get a better view. Pushing through a curtain of fir-trees he saw the huge black form of the bear, now half-way up the trunk, and the devoted ospreys fighting madly but in vain to drive him back. His eyes twinkled with appreciation, and for half a minute or so he stood watching, while that shaggy shape of doom crept slowly upward. "Some birds, sure, them fish-hawks," he muttered finally; and raised his rifle.

As the flat crash of the heavy Winchester .38 startled the forest the bear gave a grunting squawl, hung clawing for a moment, slithered downward a few feet, then fell clear out from the trunk and dropped with a thud upon the rock below. The frantic birds darted down after him, heedless of the sound of the rifle, and struck at him again and again. But in a moment or two they perceived that he was no longer anything more than a harmless mass of dead flesh and fur. Alighting beside him they examined him curiously, as if wondering how they had done it. Then, filled with exultation over their victory, they both flew back to the nest and went on feeding their young.

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To Oblige A Lady

[*Continued from page 29*]

I reckon we betteh be gittin' 'long. It's ovehlate now. Goo'night, Ethelbe't."

"Lissen heah, woman!" Ethelbe't moved threateningly, but Cousin Thelmia pretended not to see him.

"Cousin Mo', you has been doin' prizefightin' too, hasn' you?"

"Yassum." It was the only combination of words the befuddled Mo' could summon. She nodded.

"I thought you'd wroten me 'bouten knockin' out all them big fightehs." Ethelbe't retreated slightly. Cousin Thelmia went on: "Didn' you wroten me they was tryin' to match you up wif Sam Langfo'd?"

"Yassum. Da's what dey was."

Ethelbe't pulled a watch from beneath his sweater and leaned nearer the street-light.

"Reckon Ah'd betteh be gittin' on, seein' as Ah's in trainin'. Powehful pleased fo' to have fo'm'lated yo' 'quaintanceships, Mistah Cal'cotte. Powehful pleased!"

Mo' shook his hand hazily.

"Same t' you. Yassuh, same t' you."

Then Ethelbe't went on, Mo' staring after him, dizzily cognizant of the fact that the elegant person of the heavenly perfume had her hand on his arm. For the progress of a full half-block he watched Ethelbe't of the broken nose — finally to turn as one in a dream. Cousin Thelmia had both hands on his arm now and was beaming up at him.

"You is the grandes' man!" came enthuisastically. "I jus' doan know what I'd of done wifout you."

"How come?" Mo' tilted his battered hat and scratched his head with his free hand. "How come, Lady? Fust Ah'm yo' cousin, den he's yo' husban'. Den he go 'way an' heah Ah is wif you an Ah nev' seed you befo' in all mah life!"

"Sholy you is the grandes' man, to ack like that twill he's gone. The truf is," and Cousin Thelmia hesitated with the proper amount of modesty, "he *was* my husban', but he ain't no mo'. I gotten a divo'ce. 'At's how come I runned acrost to you, callin' same as which I did. Ethelbe't sholy was pestehin' me."

"Pestehin' you? *You?*" They had turned and were walking now toward Eighteenth Street, arm in arm. "Whyfo' you didn' tell me — —"

"Jus' 'cause I knowed as how you'd of taken it. I jus' could see you was a fighteh bo'n an' bred — but twouldn' do."

"Twouldn' it?"

"No. Ethelbe't's in trainin'. Sayin' which he will be in trainin' if they can fin' 'notheh wrassleh. They done got his 'ponent in the wo'khouse."

"Sho' nuff?"

"Heah comes a street-cyah. You is goin' to ride me home, isn't you?"

"Who? Me?" Mo' flopped suddenly back to earth. "Ah ain't got no money. Ah — —"

"Ain't you the grandes' man? Like's if I ca'ed if you had money. Heah. C'mon!"

She had pressed a dollar into his hand and was pulling him toward the corner as a Vine Street car made the turn from Main Street. Blankly Mo' paid the fares and tendered her the change. But she grandly refused it.

"You kin pay it back when you is oveh yo' f'nanc'l 'barasment," came cooingly. "How come you — —"

And Mo' told his story in detail giving, however, the benefit of the doubt to the elegant Mr. Carter. Cousin Thelmia shook her head.

"I fin' out 'bout 'at!" came with firmness. "Any gellman as'll he'p me so 'mantically — humph, I'll fin' out!"

"Does you know him?"

"Um-humph! An' if he am a 'mantic gellmun like you is — —"

"Was you in a pickle?"

"Sholy Ah was. Ethelbe't may be mah divo'ce husban', but he kin wrassle. He know I gotten my money bet on him at the Vine Street Chitlin' and Good Times Club fo' night afteh nex' — if we kin fin' him a 'ponent. An' now he come 'roun' to see me an' he say he won't win lessen I come back an' git ma'y wif him all oveh agin!"

"Humph!" said Mo' with a new animosity toward the broken-nosed Ethelbe't.

"An' tain't all. 'Cos I promise I would. If he gits a 'ponent an' wins, I kin pay off the las' mo'gage on my ice-cream pa'leh, which is all my ve'y own."

"Humph!"

"But how is I goin' to do it? An' just when you come 'long, he was pestehin' me to git ma'y right then, that he'd fin' a ministeh somewheh. An' if he wins an' I doan ma'y him — theh ain' no tellin' what 'at man'll do. He's jus' common lowdown. You doan know 'at man!"

Mo' agreed with her, then put his heft on feet delightfully forgotten for a whole half-hour. She had pushed the button for the next stop. Fifteen minutes later, he was leaning against a telephone pole, awaiting the one o'clock car for down-town. The misery in his feet was worse. Also the misery in his heart over the prospect of a glorious person like Thelmia Jordan who owned an ice-cream parlor and who was beautiful beyond all his dreams of women, being forced by circumstance into an alliance so loathsome. But pitted against the heavy misery in foot and heart, was less of a misery in pocketbook. He had eighty-five cents, enough for a night and day's bed and board. Besides, she had said he would hear from her when night came at Beelgie's crawdad stand. More, when night came, he heard, and the messenger was the elegant Mr. Carter.

HE LEFT his crawdad basket with a flourish at the first sight of the limping Mo' — those "foots" had not yet been fixed. He bowed in deferential fashion and extended a hand graciously.

"You mus' o' tooken de wrong d'rection," came effusively before Mo' could even ask for an explanation. "Ah looken all oveh de town fo' you!"

"Sho' nuff?" Mo' beamed with the prospect of his fifty-six dollars. Mr. Carter held his diamond where the arc light could best reveal its gleaming qualities.

"Sholy Ah did," he exclaimed. "Ah un'stan's you's 'lated to Thelmia Jo'dan?"

"Um-humph!" Mo' still was willing to play the game, as long as Cousin Thelmia was concerned.

"So she say. So she say. Ah un'stan's you rassle fo' a livin'."

"Um-humph."

"So she say. Now, Ah ast you, is you a reg'leh rassleh, or is you open to reason?"

"Is Ah which?"

"Is you willin' to 'blige a lady?"

Visions of Cousin Thelmia arose again, and memories of that perfume, to say nothing of a dollar's worth of generosity and the effulgence of the very acquaintanceship of wealth and position. Mo' swung his arms.

"Sholy Ah is. But is you willin' to 'blige a gellmun?"

"'Cose Ah is. 'Bouten which is you 'ludin'?"

"Mah fitty-six dolleh."

"Ah's comin' to 'at," came somewhat nervously from Mr. Carter. "Ah's comin' to 'at. But fus' lemme ast: is you willin' to lose a match fo' a lady?"

"Wha' kind o' match?"

"Rasslin' match, o' 'cose. Rasslin' match. Is you willin' to rassle Ethelbe't Jo'dan an' lose de match — to 'blige a lady?"

"'Pendin' on who de lady is." Mo' was fencing — he would much rather talk about that fifty-six dollars. Mr. Carter went on scornfully.

"Who de lady is! As if dey was any otheh lady siden Thelmia Jo'dan!"

"Oh!"

"Ah thunken you'd say 'at. She's plum sot on you rasslin' wif Ethelbe't, seein' his 'ponent's in de wo'khouse. But she's sca'ed you'd frow him."

"Who? Me?"

"Yeh, you. She say to me: 'Ha'ison Ca'teh, you talken it oveh wif Mistah Cal'cotte an' see wha' he say. You is de manageh o' de 'ponent. An' if he say he will, well 'n' good. Ef he say he won't — Ah'm fru!"

Mo' scratched his head. "She say 'at? 'Lucidate, Mistah Ca'teh, 'lucidate."

And Mr. Carter elucidated. Only one day more remained until the annual function and smoker of the Vine Street Chitlin' and Good Times Club, at which the program consisted of athletic sports, dancing and the general gathering of the socially elect of Kansas City's colored colony. The feature of the evening was to have been a wrestling match between Ethelbe't Jordan, the acknowledged champion of Kansas City, and Highbrown Foney, who occupied the same position in Little Rock. But Highbrown had made the mistake of arguing with a policeman and now he was in the workhouse, leaving Ethelbe't without an opponent. Now, with the reputation that Mo' Calicotte possessed, of having wrestled all over the state, and having met champions in cities like St. Louis, to say nothing of being the proud possessor of a medal awarded by the United States of America for his wrestling prowess in the army, the matter easily could be arranged for a new contender against Ethelbe't Jordan, to say nothing of forming an impetus to the betting. Mr. Carter easily could see that Wrestler Calicotte would make a good impression — under his astute guidance. Any one with his tremendous frame and vast expanse of back and muscle should form a compelling invitation to those with money to place upon his chances to win. But, naturally, there was a fine point about it, which Mr. Carter leaned closer to explain:

"'Cose Ah knows you kin frow him, but 'at ain' de point. Yo' Cousin done gwine place her money de otheh way!"

"Twill she?"

"Sho' nuff. It's de safe an' sane method. Ef she know she gwine win, why she taken chances? Un'stan'?"

Mo' didn't understand. The elegant Mr. Carter explained it further. Of course Mo', with his reputation and with his vast store of learning and experience in the wrestling game, easily could dispose of the short, blocky none-too-game Ethelbe't. But was winning a match to be compared to the winning of money — especially when the odds would be on Mo' to win, once the word of mouth press-agentship of Mr. Carter had begun, and the crowd had gained a look at him? Besides, Cousin Thelmia was in a financial position where she could not afford to take chances. Therefore, if Mo' would consent to the match, and if he further would consent, at the proper time to allow Ethelbe't Jordan to put him on his back — —

"Da's wha' Cousin Thelmia say?" Mo' looked at Mr. Carter with intensity. "She say 'at?"

"Sho' she say it. Ah taken you right in fron' o' her and let you lissen at her say it. All you gotten to do is lay down when de time comes."

"How 'bout twill Ah know when de time is?"

"Jis' lissen at Ethelbe't. 'At's all. Now, c'mon — —"

"Mebbe mah foots won' hol' out."

"Sho'! You doan hav' to do nothin' wif yo' foots!"

"But dis yere misery — —"

"C'mon. C'mon out an' tell Mis' Jo'dan. She done want de wo'd from yo' own mouf — —"

"But wheh at is mah fitty-six dolleh?"

Mr. Carter moved still closer and fastened a cold eye upon his new protégé.

"'At's de ancho' money, Boy. 'At's de ancho' money. Mis' Jo'dan, she got it. Mis' Jo'dan she bet it 'long wif her own money 'at Ethelbe't wins. Ef you's a do-right man, you wins double — or mo'. Ef you's jis' out for a rep'tation — —"

"Ah doan want no rep'tation. Ah wants mah fitty-six dolleh. Ah's gotten to git mah foots fixed!"

"'En c'mon, Black Boy. We go an' 'range de details!"

There was only one thing to do, now that Fate had thrown Mo' into a maelstrom instead of a chiropodist's office. That was to follow the elegant Mr. Carter to a Vine Street car and thence to the back room of Mrs. Thelmia Jordan's ice-cream parlor. There, as through a fog, he heard the details, saw his fifty-six dollars — less ten per cent. commission which Mr. Carter claimed as his rightful share — placed in the hands of his idol, to be held in trust in the betting ring until he should fulfil his agreement. There he listened to the gruff voice of Ethelbe't Jordan, also attending the conference, giving instructions. There was interest and joy on the face of Ethelbe't and Mr. Carter. There was hazy blankness on the big features of Mo' Calicotte. There was sadness and sorrow in the beautiful orbs of Thelmia Jordan, and a resignation in her voice that even penetrated Mo'. At the finish of the conference, he rose to go, but her eyes held him.

"Ah wants to 'splain to Cousin Mo' 'bouten his money," she said as she ushered the other two forth. Then she turned, despairingly. "What is I to do?"

"How come?"

"Doan you un'stan'?" Weeping slightly, she laid her head for a moment on Mo's bulging chest. "Cain' you un'stan' my h'a't? If I wins, I loses!"

"How, which?" The added weight, in

spite of the enthrallment of it, was being echoed in those feet. "How——"

"If I wins, I gits the mo'gage money. But I loses my gi'lish f'eedom!"

"You lose yo' who?"

"My f'eedom. Didn' I tell you Ethelbe't make me ma'y him agin if he wins?"

"Um-humph! You tole me. Ain' 'at te'ible?"

"But it's gotten to be did." Cousin Thelmia turned from the manly chest and sadly put forth a hand. "Evenin', Cousin Mo'. You is the grandes' man to do all this fo' me. Tell me, has you ev' wrassled?"

"Jis' fo' play-fun."

"But yo' is wrassled? You kin make a showin'."

"Um-humph. Evenin', Cousin Thelmia. Ah reckons Ah betteh be gittin' down to de room an' soakin' mah foots. Ah's powerful 'fea'ed dey ain' gwine hol' out!"

"Oh, you musn' say such!"

Nevertheless, Mo' did say it, and many times over as he traveled downtown again. Once in his room, however, with the offending foots in hot water, he could give his attention to other things. A deep problem was upon him. If he won that match, which he knew he couldn't do, he lost his money, Cousin Thelmia couldn't pay off the mortgage money—but she would be free from Ethelbe't. If he lost, he would gain many dollars, and so would Cousin Thelmia—but there would be Ethelbe't, waiting at the church! He couldn't win and lose at the same time! It was too much of a problem. He tried to give it up. But he couldn't do that either. Sleep found him still murmuring: "Ef Ah loses, Ah gits de money an Ethelbe't gits de peaches. Ef Ah wins, nobody doan git nuffin'!"

The Long Hole

They played the match from Manhooset all the way to New York—over the hazards as they lay—and the stake was a girl. Another of Wodehouse's inimitable golf comedies.

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And evidently there were persons who thought he was going to win. The word was spreading, even as Mo' slept. It continued to spread, in the ham joints, and cafés of the negro section of Vine Street, along the streets, among the crawdad vendors and about the crap games. With the result that the next afternoon, when Mo', bulging from a set of green tights, and bulging farther from a pair of gymnasium shoes which did not possess the surcease of razor slits, accompanied by his manager, the grandiloquent Mr. Carter, made his appearance on the dance floor of the Vine Street Chitlin' and Good Times Club, for his "work-out", the crowd was limited only by the hall's capacity.

What Mo' knew of wrestling had been gained solely from the usual scrimmages down in Lexington, with an occasional contest for the pigtail prize at the last barbecue of the season. But that, combined with his enormous heft, was sufficient to dispose of the three or four contestants who sought to gain an idea of his prowess, and found themselves leaned upon by some two hundred and a quarter pounds of solid muscle, raised and placed shoulders down upon the floor again. The white rings of many eyes began to show. Mr. Carter led his acquisition to the dressing-room and to the joy of his old shoes. The onlookers hastened out in search of loose money that talked in favor of Ethelbe't Jo'dan. Manager Carter left the room—and with his leaving, there came a knock on the door. Mo' opened it, chink-wise. It was Cousin Thelmia.

"When I says 'lose'," she ordered hastily, "I doesn't say lose easy. You's gotten powehful ahms fo' squeezin', Cousin Mo'. 'Cose, Ah ain' sayin' nothin', but his ribs is kind o' weak——"

Then she faded. Persons were approaching—among them the owner and proprietor and reporter for the *Daily African Rising Sun and Bugle,* to interview Mo' on his chances. With him was Manager Carter, and with the reporter when he left was a column and a half of opinions by the manager, but little from Mo', except, of course, the confession that his foots hurt.

The afternoon dwindled. Night came. Very hazily for Mo'. The green tights, just as hazily. Mo's mind was centered on one thing—the memory of a vision in the doorway and the knowledge that Cousin Thelmia wouldn't object to a few marks of battle upon her prospective—and uninvited—second husband. Limping, his feet protesting more than ever against the tightness of the gymnasium shoes, Mo' made his way to the padded enclosure which had been erected in the center of the dance floor, glancing vacuously as he did so at the throngs about him. As far as he was concerned, it was mostly a sea of black—until——

A handkerchief had fluttered and a brown smile had flashed over white teeth. Cousin Thelmia! Mo' stopped, waved a long arm, then went on again, happy and puzzled, sorrowful and glad. In the offing lay his money—plus. But in the offing also lay Ethelbe't, dragging his bride to the altar.

"Time!"

They were in the ring, Ethelbe't, chunky and malicious appearing, chatting with his seconds, the referee grandly looking at a borrowed watch, and motioning for the contestants to sally forward for the delivery of the rules of battle. There must be no biting, no blows, no strangle-holds or head-butting. All of which Ethelbe't heard with the air of a jaded professional, and which Mo' absorbed with a knowledge of joy. Nothing was said about squeezing or general rough-housing. He took his corner again, and held one aching foot a moment. Then at the signal, he came forth.

Amid the screams and yells of the packed dance-hall, Mo' groped about at the dancing Ethelbe't, seized him and tossed him half across the arena. Then he clasped him gorilla fashion and hung on while Ethelbe't's feet dangled and Ethelbe't's breath came short and hard. Again he tossed him, and grinning, looked toward the spot where he knew approval was waiting. It was a fatal move.

Something grabbed him from behind and dumped him forward, on his face. Something plumped on his back and began an attempt to squirm an arm under his chin for a half-nelson. Mo' fought it off. The busy energetic form of Ethelbe't moved with more celerity than ever, pulling at Mo's head, jerking at his arms, and striving to run one leg under his stomach for a scissors hold. But Mo' rebelled. He had received his instructions from one who was all important—and he wasn't ready to be thrown. Ethelbe't, stalling at a hammerlock, leaned close to his opponent's ear.

"Lif' up 'at ahm!" he ordered, "an' lemme git a-holt. Lif' up 'at ahm!"

"Tain' time yit!"

"Tain' time? We gotten 'notheh fall t' go afteh this'n. Lif' up 'at ahm——"

"Tain' time——"

"Oh, quit yo' foolishness! Gimme a-holt. Gimme——"

THEN he turned with a sudden inspiration. Mo's sorest foot was half raised, to relieve it from the tension on the floor. A leap and Ethelbe't had seized it, clenched it tight in both hands and begun the twisting torment of a toe-hold. Mo' scrambled. His hands scratched a drum-beat on the resined canvas. His eyes rolled. A second he stood the pain. A second more. Then, bawling, he twisted: "Leggo mah foot!"

"Hush up, Boy!" Ethelbe't was safe in the pandemonium of the roaring hall. "Hush up yo' noise an' roll oveh!"

"Leggo mah foot!"

"Hush yo' shoutin'." Ethelbe't put on more pressure. "Roll oveh, an' hush——"

"Ah done tole you, leggo mah foot!" Tears were streaming down Mo's shining face now, and the eyes were popping. "Ah's got de misery in 'at foot—leggo it! Heah me—leggo——"

"Done have sompin' else ef you doan roll oveh——"

"L-e-g-g-o m-a-h foot!"

It was a bawling shout which could be heard above even the concerted roaring of the Vine Street Chitlin' Club. Ethelbe't, harassed, tired from his attempts to turn a thing that lay like a walnut log, hunked his muscles, put his tongue between his teeth and then yanked at that foot with all the strength he possessed. He got an answer.

It came in the form of a yowling, squawking Mo' who twisted from his grasp, kicked him half across the ring, then rose, his arms swinging wildly, his eyes seeming to dangle on his cheeks.

"Ain' gwine hu't mah foots!"

"Boys—fight p'etty now—" It was the referee. One slanting swing from Mo's right arm, slaunched him out of the arena. Then Mo' loped forward, to where Ethelbe't was just coming to his feet.

The Vine Street Chitlin' and Good Times Club yelled and shouted. Some of the huskier members leaped into the ring—then leaped out again. The referee, coming dizzily to his senses, crawled through the ropes and slewing about to one side, lifted the arm of Ethelbe't Jo'dan in announcement that he had won by a foul. To which Mo' paid little attention save the fact that it turned Ethelbe't about in a position where he could wallop him straight on the jaw. To the canvas went Ethelbe't. Then he rose—only to fall again, while a two hundred and a quarter pound mass of outraged anger pounded upon him, straddled his chest and pounded harder than ever. In the dance hall, some one leaned against a window and went through, starting a small-sized panic. The doors began to jam as the crowd milled. The shouts grew louder. But Mo' didn't know. He was too busy. Nor did Ethelbe't, drowsing away to a trip-hammer lullaby into a land of golden dreams.

Squawks—then a yell more excited than ever. The clanging of a bell and the roar of a motor—from the South Side station. A sudden fade-away to leave only two persons in the Good Times dance hall, Mo' Calicotte and the man beneath him.

"Didn' Ah tole you Ah had de misery in mah foots?" Mo' yelled for the fiftieth time. "Didn' Ah tole you——"

Then he felt a hand on his shoulder. Five minutes later, still in his green tights, still in his tight gymnasium shoes, he limped into the bull-pen of the South Side station, gulped dubiously at his surroundings, then flopped in a corner, long to remain there. The world had gone to pot. There would be no chirpodis' now, no nothing. There——

A voice brought him back to earth, a voice gay with happiness, coy with affection. Mo' cocked his head. Mo' ran a heavy tongue over heavier lips. Then Mo' moved forward upon feet that suddenly ceased to ache. The door was opening, and beside the jailer stood an elegant person of an elegant perfume.

"You po' soul!" she breathed cooingly as Mo' limped from his prison in obedience to the summons of the jailer. "I liked to runned myself to def gittin' down heah to go yo' bon'. You is the sweetes' pusson!"

"How come?" Mo' could only gasp the question.

"Ain't you know? They took Ethelbe't to the hospital."

"Sho' nuff?"

"Same as so!" She patted him upon the cheek. "Won't be pestehin' me no mo' 's long as you's aroun'. An' you *is* goin' be 'roun', isn' you?"

"Who? Me?"

"'Cose you! Afteh you doin' so noble an' lettin' us win ouh bet an' lammin' Ethelbe't at the same time—is I goin' to let you go 'way wifout nuffin'? Is I? An' me jus' dyin' fo' a man to stay at the ice cream pa'leh night-times!" They were leaving the station now, she in her elegant clothing, he in his green tights. A breeze swept them, and Mo' shivered slightly with the contact. She edged closer. "Say you isn't goin'—" she whispered, "say you isn't——"

Mo' found his tongue.

"'Cose—cose Ah isn'."

Again she snuggled closer. She looked up at him.

"You suttinly *is* the grandes' man!" Then silence for a full half-block. Finally: "Lookut the stahs—an' the moon. I nev' saw a night so 'mantic. What say we walk on the da'k streets back to the club to git yo' clo's. I jus' love to walk on 'mantic nights. Doesn't you, Cousin Mo'?"

"Who? Me?" A broad, wide grin hit Mo's features, and settling there, spread to take in all surroundings. "Lady, Ah'll walk wif you twill de jedgmen' day—if mah foots hol' out!"

Eva L. Haskett Spiceland, Ind.

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Look in Uncle Sam's Boot!

— *Continued from page 34*

typewritten memorandum — it turns out to be an exhibit of the physical properties of the United States Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation only in the title. For, in fact, it is merely an *estimate* of the *net* expenditures down to a given date. It is essentially like the so-called balance sheet in the annual report of the Shipping Board, which shows all expenditures as assets, including operating expenses.

THE accounts of this three and one-half billion dollar business have been in the greatest confusion. It was not until the middle of 1920 that the task of putting them in order was seriously faced, and by that time so much information had been lost that there was almost no hope of ever being able to construct a perfect set of books. Meanwhile it could not say what its assets were, exactly where they were, how much they would earn, or how much they could be sold for. All of this was inevitable, owing, first, to the nature and conditions of the undertaking; second, to the abrupt derangement of all plans by the sudden ending of the war, and third, to the fact that there has been neither a continuous administration nor a settled policy.

However, we now are concerned with sequels and consequences. It is a colossal fact that here in the name of the Emergency Fleet Corporation are free, convertible and productive assets representing an investment of about three and one-half billion dollars, with an unknown salvage value lying entirely outside the financial reckoning of the government. The Secretary of the Treasury, who is the responsible financial officer of the government, has no formal knowledge of their existence.

On June 29, 1921, two years and eight months after the end of the war, the following news item appeared in the daily press:

"Robert H. Montgomery, a New York accountant, was selected to-day by the Shipping Board to make a complete inventory of its property. At the present time the Board has no fair idea of the value of its assets."

This, of course, is the most egregious case of all. Yet there are other very large groups of assets in the same category.

The work of the Emergency Fleet Corporation now is to liquidate and go out of business. It is under the injunction of a national policy. It will dispose of its ships as fast as it can; meanwhile it will operate them or hire them out to be privately operated. With the ships go the shipyards, plants and all auxiliary property. This is the largest liquidating job of which there is any record extant. You would think the men in charge of it had their hands full. Yet in the Merchant Marine bill, it is provided that the United States Shipping Board shall take over, control, maintain and develop all those docks, piers, warehouses, wharves, terminals and equipment acquired by the President in the emergency of war; also such other similar property acquired during the war by the army and navy as the President may deem it wise to transfer to the Shipping Board.

Here are assets of unknown extent and value. The Shipping Board knew nothing about them. First they will have to be segregated; then their cost will have to be ascertained from a great number of scattered records. Some of these properties will be salable; some of them, no doubt, will be permanently retained by the government. Questions of policy are involved. Meanwhile, as a matter of policy already determined, the Shipping Board is going out of business.

You may say, of course, that since the Shipping Board in any case will survive for a number of years it is proper that all of the government's surplus marine and longshore property, including piers, terminals, warehouses, etc., should be in its possession. Perhaps. Only then how much more logical it would seem for all of the government's surplus ships to be turned over to the Shipping Board for sale. Is that done? On the contrary, while the Shipping Board is struggling with the problem of how to sell a vast fleet of cargo and passenger boats, barges, tugs, tankers, etc., without glutting the market or running down prices, the Navy Department, going on its own, advertises a great bargain sale of cargo boats and tugs.

Second only to shipbuilding as an extra-governmental job run on independent lines was the Federal control of railroads. All that the United States Shipping Board and the Emergency Fleet Corporation lack in the shape of figures the United States Railroad Administration has. Its statistics are tall and endless. Railroad people eat figures. Taking it without details, the case is this: More than two billions of public money went into the job first and last — for guarantees, compensation, expenses of administration, loans to the roads, new equipment, etc. Approximately one-half of this great sum is gone for good. We charge it up to the cost of victory. But when all the settlements shall have been made, when what the railroads owe the government has been offset by what the government owes the railroads, when the claims against the roads for over-maintenance have been balanced by claims against the government for under-maintenance, etc., etc., the railroads finally will owe the government perhaps one billion dollars. For this enormous sum, roughly equal to the whole national debt before the war, the United States Railroad Administration and the Interstate Commerce Commission between them will hold railroad securities of various kinds, all payable, principal and interest, over a series of years.

And this immense free capital asset is like the assets of the United States Shipping Board and Emergency Fleet Corporation. The Secretary of the Treasury has no official knowledge of its existence. Therefore, he does not put it anywhere into the picture of the government's financial condition.

Of the other Emergency War Corporations named, the United States Grain Corporation and the United States Housing Corporation have gone out of business. The War Finance Corporation went out of business, returned its capital to the Treasury, and was then revived. We cannot exhibit its assets in detail.

And now we come to speak of the loans to foreign countries. The debtors are Belgium, Cuba, Czecho-Slovakia, France, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Liberia, Rumania, Russia and Serbia. The principal is ten billions; the interest accrued and temporarily in default is roughly one-half billion more, making in all ten and one-half billions. This is money loaned directly by the United States Treasury to our associates in the war. It holds their I O U's.

IN a very rough way the free, productive and convertible assets of the government can now be cast up as follows:

Investment Assets	
(a) Loans to railroads, for which the Railroad Administration and the Interstate Commerce Commission hold their notes and securities....	$1,000,000,000
(b) Loans to foreign governments — our associates in the war — principal and accrued interest	10,500,000,000
(c) Due from other foreign countries, for relief, etc. ...	200,000,000
(d) Miscellaneous domestic loans through War Finance Corporation and other agencies....................	100,000,000
Physical Assets	
(e) Ships, shipyards, etc., property of Emergency Fleet Corporation, at 50 cents on the dollar..................	1,750,000,000
(f) Piers, terminals, warehouses, commercial real estate, plants, industrial materials, etc.	650,000,000
Total	$14,200,000,000

How shall these assets be regarded?

Most of the investment assets are slow but good, meaning that it will take a little time to begin to get the money back. The loans to foreign governments are of that character. Out of ten and one-half billions of foreign loans, nine billions are owing to us by four countries, namely, Great Britain, France, Italy and Belgium. And if their obligations are not ultimately good, then international finance is a modern absurdity. The best of debtors often need a little grace. That interest, for the time, is in default is no reflection upon either the solvency of those nations or their ability to pay.

The loans to railroads are necessarily good. This is a unique case. The Interstate Commerce Commission has the power to allow such rates as will enable the railroads to live and pay their debts, including, of course, their debts to the United States government. And with an investment of a billion dollars in railroad securities the government's view of the railroad problem is likely in the future to be much more — what shall we say? — practical than was ever the case in the past.

Time will sweeten all the investment assets, unless the whole world is minded to go bankrupt; but it is very different with physical assets. They deteriorate with time; they require to be worked and renewed and kept productive in order to hold their value until they may be sold; and even so, unless the selling is managed with great skill, they are easily murdered simply because of the magnitude of the selling operation.

BUT let us allow for calamity and disappointment. We have seen investment and physical assets aggregating fourteen billions. And that was after taking the assets of the Emergency Fleet Corporation at only 50 cents on the dollar. Suppose we write them down. Suppose we cast to the winds as a total loss the colossal sum of four billions. What we cast away is four times our national debt before the war. Having performed this feat, we still have a figure of ten billions to represent convertible investment and physical assets such as may be applied to the liquidation of the government's own war debt.

What is that war debt?

There is a floating debt of, say, two and one-half billions. A floating debt is a debt for which no bonds have been issued. However, as this is being paid off out of tax receipts we need not stop to consider it here.

The total war debt as represented by Liberty Bonds, Victory Notes and War Savings Certificates is approximately twenty billions.

But the government's free and convertible assets (with four billions written off in doubt) are ten billions.

That is to say, in financial language, that Liberty Bonds have a book value of fifty per cent., or one-half their face value, leaving only the other half to be redeemed by taxation. By a book value of fifty per cent. is meant that if the government went out of business and divided up its salable assets among its creditors, namely, the holders of Liberty Bonds, they would realize fifty cents on the dollar.

To understand the extraordinary nature of this fact, you have to remember that a government normally has no such salable assets and its bonds have no book value whatever. Normally, that is to say, a government's one and only resource is to levy taxes. Here is a case in which a government, though it should lose entirely the power to levy taxes, could still pay fifty cents on every dollar of its war debt, or more, simply by dividing up among its creditors its investment and commercial assets.

Yet from all this body of assets, for which we found a gross figure of fourteen billions, there is nothing coming in — almost nothing. The railroads will not begin to pay on their loans until the grand settlement of accounts now taking place has been completed. The United States Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation this year for the first time is undertaking just to live on its own, without putting any more new money into the job. And the foreign governments owing us ten and one-half billions are, with minor exceptions, paying us back nothing as yet, neither principal nor interest, and will need several years more of grace. In the meantime, the American taxpayer is taxed to pay interest on the whole of the government's funded war debt, and at the same time to clear off a floating debt of two and one-half billions, altogether as if there were no offsetting assets whatever.

Meanwhile there is no policy as to the assets.

As they were acquired in war time, that is, competitively, the various departments and bureaus bidding against each other, so now in the same way they are being disposed of in peace time, so far as they are being disposed of at all, as, for example, when the Navy and the Shipping Board compete with each other in the sale of ships.

It goes to this extent, that the government does not know how to buy its own assets from itself. Thus, while Congress is appropriating money for hardware, hand tools, tableware, kitchen utensils, materials for making clothing, etc., for the Federal prisons, the Navy buys newspaper space to advertise a "sale at big discounts" of hardware, hand tools, hotel and restaurant chinaware, cooking utensils, house furnishings and woolen textiles.

Consider just this one momentous fact: If the government could dispose of its free assets for seventy cents on the dollar it could pay off at one stroke half its whole war debt; and taxation might be reduced accordingly. Never in the history of government finance was there a fact comparable to this.

Yet in no single center of its intelligence — financial, political, executive or legislative — does this government know what these assets are, where they are, or what they are worth. Therefore, it cannot possibly have any rational way with them.

If a private corporation with capital assets that have cost fifteen billions of dollars were unable to account for them all on one sheet of paper the size of this page, intelligently grouped, defined and appraised, the stockholders would dismiss the management, or, if they didn't, the creditors would go to the courts for a receiver to protect the property.

If an individual possessing capital assets that had cost fifteen or twenty billions was unable to account for them his heirs would hale him to court as an incompetent and sue for trustees to be appointed.

But the government is neither a corporation nor an individual. It is responsible only to popular opinion, and popular opinion is celebratedly unfinancial. Fancy the assets of the United States Steel Corporation or of the Federal Reserve Bank System being handled by popular opinion. It is not popular opinion's business.

What was needed immediately after the signing of the armistice — what is still needed — is one great Realization Commission, organized for business purposes, to take over, capitalize, conserve and scientifically liquidate the government's assets.

These assets were created and brought to the government by the genius of American business — by men acting dynamically in a common cause. They were trusted without limit. Never in the history of human conduct was confidence less abused.

It is absurd to say that the genius of American business is unequal to the task of transferring those assets from the government to private hands, safely, honestly and with a minimum of loss. If, for example, the true spirit of American business were challenged it would find a way to take over at one stroke the whole three and one-half billion dollar ship enterprise on such terms as will never be realized by the present method of putting the properties up in parcels at auction, or, in default of purchasers for the ships, letting them out to be worked on a profit-sharing basis. This method calls to the selfishness of individuals; it misses entirely the great spirit of adventure in American business.

As physical properties deteriorate, the government's wealth in physical assets is each day somewhat less. Therefore, you would think the problem of scientific realization was pressing.

Is it?

THERE is no sign of its pressing anywhere at all. The taxpayer is good for the whole American war debt, even though the physical assets be a total loss. That is as a government thinks. A government thinks taxes. It cannot think assets.

Investment assets do not deteriorate. They will improve with time. As to these, therefore, the problem is different. It is technically a matter of banking; broadly it is a question of public policy on which the taxpayer's opinion has not been asked.

He is taxed on the whole American war debt as if all the investment assets were bad.

He is paying interest on ten and one-half billions owed to this country by solvent foreign countries.

He is paying interest on a billion dollars owed to the government by the railroads.

He is paying this money not because it is necessary but because he can and will.